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THE SCARLET HAND;

OR,
The Orphan Heiress of Fifth Avenue.

A STORY OF
NEW YORK HEARTHS AND NEW YORK HOMES.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,

Author of "The Ace of Spades," "The Witches of New York," Etc.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RESULT OF THE ENCOUNTER.

MORDAUNT, sitting in the shadow of the doorway, watched anxiously for the reappearance of Allyne Strathroy. The minutes passed slowly. Thirty at least, had elapsed and still the young man came not from the house.

"I'm afraid that there is something wrong," the actor muttered, his feeling of uneasiness becoming intense. "Is the only man who has showed me kindness for many a long month to be taken away from me? I swear if evil has happened to him in this bad spot, I'll devote the rest of my worthless life to hunting down the authors of that evil." But, as the watcher spoke, the door opposite opened, and a man came forth.

"Ah! it's all right—he's safe!" To Allyne Strathroy cried Mordaunt, softly, to himself, as he watched the man who had come from the door, walk briskly down the street. "But what the deuce could have brought him into this locality, and at this hour? There's some mystery about it. To-morrow I'll call upon him. He has a heart!"

Then Mordaunt rose to his feet. His thin, dry limbs were cramped with cold. The door behind him opened suddenly, and a man appeared.

"Vat you want in mine doorway, eh?" cried the man, in an unmistakable Jewish voice.

"What?" exclaimed Mordaunt, in astonishment—for the voice was well known to him. "Abel Hameleek, or I do forget myself?"

"You know me, eh?" asked the Jew, in astonishment.

"I do!" responded Mordaunt, in a deep, theatrical tone. "Oh, my prophetic soul, my uncle! Three balls! Two to one you don't take out what you put in!—Hast thou forgotten the child of genius, Edmund Mordaunt?"

"Why, 'shelp me if it isn't Mister Mordaunt!" cried the Jew, in delight.

"Yes, what's left of him? Do you live here, 'bally rook?"

"Yesh."

"What, you live here? you who can buy a square mile of New York?" exclaimed the actor, in wonder.

"Hush!" cried the Jew, nervously. "I ish a poor man, 'shelp me. A very poor. Vat you do here, eh?"

"Abel, I'm down on my back; a ruined man now is Sir Thomas Clifford. Abel, an hour ago if all New York could have been bought for ten cents, I wouldn't have been able to have bought it."

"Dat ish bad," said the Jew, slowly. "You drink—fool your money away. I remember de first time you come to mine little shop; you pawn your diamonds for five hundred dollars; de last time, I take your boots for twenty-five shents."

"Yes, and it was a quick drop too from the diamonds to the boots."

"You ish hard up now, eh?"

"You bet!" replied the actor, laconically.

"You want a place to sleep to-night?"

"Well, I shouldn't object," the Jew replied, "but you shall have him. I ish not rich, but poor—very poor."

"Abel, your heart's all right, old boy," cried the actor, touched to the quick by the Jew's offer. "May you never want a friend if ever you get down in the world."

"Shelp me, I am an honest man," said the Jew, proudly. "I likes you, you good actor but very foolish young man. You spend monish like water; ah! dat ish bad! I feels sorry for you. I have a leetle room here. I rent it to you eight dollars per month; dat ish dirt cheap; you pays me when you gets ready. I trust you. I ish not a hard man, 'shelp me."

The vagabond was in luck that night. Two friends had come to his aid. So, with thankfulness in his heart, Mordaunt followed the old Jew into the house.

With quick steps the young man who emerged from the little house into which Allyne Strathroy had gone, a half-hour before, hastened up Baxter street to Bayard, turned into that street, and proceeded onward until he reached the Bowery. On the corner of Bayard street and the Bowery he halted beneath the lamp-post.

By the rays of the gas-light, falling upon his face, we can see that he is deadly pale. Large drops of perspiration are standing upon his forehead, although the air is cold, and the chill night-wind cuts one to the bone.

As the young man stood upon the corner, he staggered against the lamp-post as if overcome by a sudden faintness, and but for the support of the iron pillar he would have fallen.

Then a Third Avenue car approaching, going up-town, the young man hailed it, entered, seated himself in a corner, and the car proceeded on its way.

At Twenty-ninth street the man, whose course we are tracing, alighted and proceeded up the street toward the west.

His feeble, uncertain steps showed that he was in pain. It was confirmed by the pallor of his face. He breathed with difficulty.

Reaching Fifth Avenue, he turned into it. Paused before a stately brown-stone mansion. Slowly and with evident pain he ascended the steps. The rays of light thrown out by the street lamps fall upon the silver door-plate, and the name of Allyne Strathroy shines in bold relief.

The young man opened the door by means of a latch-key, and then fell fainting over the threshold.

The noise of the door opening had attracted the attention of some of the inmates of the mansion, and an old gray-headed servant appeared at the head of the stairs. His gaze fell, first upon the opened door, then upon the body of the young man, stretched, apparently lifeless, across the entryway.

"Heavens! It is master Allyne, and dead!" he cried, in dismay, then ran down the stairs.

The outcry of the old servant brought in to the hall a terrified group from the parlor,

who looked with horror upon the white face of the fainting man.

First came the promised wife of Allyne Strathroy, the beautiful Blanche Maybury, the orphan heiress.

Blanche was indeed a lovely girl. Straight as the chestnut sapling, yet graceful as the swaying willow; lithe in form, supple in motion, she glided, rather than walked.

Her form perfection itself; a model for a Venus. Her face a study for the artist who seeks to reproduce upon his canvas the ideal of noble womanhood. Her hair—a dark, rich brown in hue—rippled back in wavy masses—which in the sunlight was tinged here and there with lambent flames of gold—from a low, sweet forehead, pure Greek in its outline. Large brown eyes, clear as the mountain streamlet, lit up the face. Her features were small but exquisitely cut. The small, dimpled chin; the crimson-pored mouth that hid pearly teeth, betraying

yielding lips that passion's fires brightly the brunette's hue, nor yet the paler of the blonde, but the rose-tint between the two, so seldom seen in the human face. All these perfect things made Blanche Maybury's face almost perfection itself.

Behind Blanche came Miss Jennie Strathroy, Allyne's aunt, a lady of uncertain age, but far from being young, as the streaks of gray in her reddish-brown hair could testify.

A good-natured, motherly old soul, who had been to young Allyne all that a parent could be, for Agnes Strathroy, the wife of Clinton, and mother of Allyne, had died a few years after her husband's mysterious disappearance; that disappearance we have before spoken of.

"Oh, he is dead!" cried Blanche, with white lips, as she looked upon the face of the man who was dearer to her than all the world beside.

"No, Miss Blanche," replied the old servant—a shrewd, "canny" Scotchman, named Angus Kilmarnock—"he has only fainted."

Then raising the young man as if he had been an infant, in his muscular arms, Angus carried him up-stairs to his own chamber, and laid him upon the bed. The two women followed.

"Had we not better send for a doctor?" asked the old lady, gazing with alarm upon the pale face of her nephew.

"Yes, ma'am, at once," replied Angus. "I will see if I can bring him out of his faint. I'm afraid he has been attacked by some ruffians, as his shirt-bosom is stained with blood."

The doctor was sent for immediately. Then, warm water and a sponge being brought, Angus proceeded to examine the nature of the young man's wounds. The two ladies retired, their places being supplied by two of the servants, the butler and the coachman.

Carefully they removed the young man's coat and vest. As Angus had said, the bosom of the shirt was stained with blood. The shirt being removed carefully, the old servant washed away the clot of blood and revealed an ugly-looking cut on the left side

just above the heart, some three inches in length. But, on examination Angus found to his astonishment that it was hardly half an inch deep. A mere flesh-wound, nothing more.

With a smothered groan, the young man opened his eyes. A look of astonishment was on his face as he surveyed those around him.

"Where am I?" he muttered, in a low tone, as if in doubt.

"Why, in your own room, Mr. Allyne," said Angus.

"Oh, yes, I see now," said the young man, absently.

"How did this happen, sir?" respectfully said the coachman, who was bursting with curiosity.

"I was attacked by some roughs on the avenue. I suppose they intended to rob me. Luckily I was prepared for them. One of them cut me, though, I think."

"Yes, sir," replied the servant; "but it is not dangerous."

"That is lucky," said the injured man. "I came home at once. I remember opening the door with my latch-key, and then I suppose I fainted, for I can not remember any thing more."

"Yes, sir, I heard you fall in the hall," said Angus.

Then the doctor came—examined the wound—declared that Mr. Strathroy had a narrow escape—dressed the hurt, and departed.

The wounded man slept but little that night, for dread thoughts were in his mind. And when at last slumber came upon him, his rest was broken by fearful dreams. Again he was in a deadly contest—again he saw stretched upon the floor, with a knife-thrust through his heart, a man whose features strangely resembled his own.

CHAPTER V.

THE MURDERED MAN.

THE morning that succeeded the night on which occurred the events we have related, came clear and bright.

Duke, the Slasher, who had made an appointment to meet Jim Kidd in the morning, in a corner liquor store on Canal street, near Baxter, waited in vain for the young man to come.

At last, growing impatient, Duke determined to go to Kidd's room, and see, if possible, what had become of him.

Arriving at the door of the wooden tenement, Duke tried it. The door was open. So, without further ceremony, he entered. He proceeded up-stairs, and opening the door of Kidd's room, walked in. As the shutters were all closed, of course the place was in total darkness.

Duke opened a window, and threw back the shutter, letting a flood of light into the room. Then closing the window he turned. Kidd was lying on the bed, apparently asleep. As Duke advanced to him to wake him, his eyes fell upon a long, glittering knife lying upon the floor. At the sight, Duke started. A feeling of apprehension came upon him. Then he noticed that the face of Kidd was deathly white—that the eyes were open, staring wide.

Quickly the Slasher advanced to the side of the bed. Thence, a single glance confirmed the suspicion that had entered his mind.

"My God!" he cried, in horror, "he's dead!"

John Duke had spoken but the truth, for the man upon the bed was far beyond mortal aid. A single, straight thrust through the heart had sent him to his long home. No time had been given for repentance; he had received the dread summons with all his errors fresh upon his head. The slender-bladed knife upon the floor, with the blood still upon it, evidently had been the weapon that had taken the life of the man now lying so still.

"Who could have done this?" cried the Slasher, in wonder. Then he bent over the body, and examined the wound. "A single blow, and that is all," muttered the rough. "He's bled to death, internally."

Such was the truth, for but a few drops of blood had welled forth and stained the linen of the dead man.

"Who could have done this?" again repeated the Slasher, in wonder. "Whoever struck the blow, must have taken Kidd by surprise—perhaps came upon him when he was asleep. Poor Jimmy, how natural he looks!" And the rough for a few moments gazed in silence upon the face of the man who had been his comrade.

"I remember," Jimmy said last night that he expected a visitor. Now, who was that visitor, and did he have any thing to do with this bloody work?"

Then Duke looked around the apartment, seeking some clue to unravel the mystery of the murder. His eyes fell upon something white under the table. Eagerly the Slasher pounced upon it. It was an envelope addressed "Allyne Strathroy, No. 363 Fifth Avenue." Duke drew forth the letter contained in the envelope. It read as follows:

"If Mr. Allyne desires to know the fate of his father, who disappeared so mysteriously twenty-two years ago, by calling upon the undersigned at No. 52 Baxter street (near Leonard), on Wednesday evening, at nine o'clock, he will be gratified.

(Signed), "WILLIAMS."

"That's in Jimmy's own handwriting, I'm sure," muttered Duke, as he finished reading the letter and replaced it in the envelope.

"What little game was Jimmy tryin' to play? Why did he want young Strathroy to come here?"

For a few moments, the Slasher mused over this difficult question.

"Jim Kidd knew nothing 'bout Clinton

Strathroy, that I'm sure. What little game was he up to? Did this young fellow come, and did he give Jimmy a quarrel, and did he give Kidd that stab?" The Slasher shook his head with a puzzled air.

"No; it ain't possible. Kidd was never killed in a fair fight. Whoever did it, must have struck him when he was asleep. Anyhow, I'll just hold on to this little document."

And Duke put the letter away securely in his pocket. "I'll just call up and see this Allyne Strathroy. If he had any thing to do with this matter—and I'll charge him with it openly—why, he'll be glad to pay me to keep my mouth shut. I wonder if he looks any thing like his father? It would be a hunky bit of vengeance now, to pay back the son for the wrong the father did my sister! Well, we'll see. Now, I'll just give the alarm and call in the police. Jimmy, old pard," and the Slasher took a long look at the white, silent lips, and wax-like face, "I little thought when I 'lit out' last night, that you were a-goin' to 'pass your checks in' so soon. Won't the boys miss him, though, next election?"

Such was the epitaph of the murdered man.

Duke departed in search of a policeman. The policeman found, he came at once to the scene of the murder, and dispatched a messenger for the coroner.

The news of the murder speedily spread, and a crowd collected around the wooden hovel.

Mordaunt, coming from the hospitable shelter of the Jew's dwelling, was attracted by the crowd. He crossed the street and inquired of a bystander what the matter was.

"A feller murdered," said the man.

"Murdered!" cried the actor, in astonishment. "Where? in this house?" And he pointed to the wooden building that he had so eagerly watched the night before.

"Yes," replied the man.

"Who is it? do you know his name?"

"Yes, Jimmy Kidd."

An intense desire took possession of the actor to see the murdered man. He made known his desire to the short-haired individual who had given him the information.

"Easy 'huff," responded that worthy. "Just say you're one of them reporter fellers. Here comes the coroner."

So at the heels of that official, Mordaunt passed up the narrow stairway and entered the room, wherein lay the body on the bed, just as it had been discovered by Duke, a half-hour before.

Mordaunt pressed forward with the rest to look at the murdered man's face. As the actor's eyes fell upon the white face, a half-suppressed cry came from his lips. He could hardly believe his senses, for the face before him, pale in death, was the face of Allyne Strathroy!

Mordaunt felt as if he was under the influence of some horrible dream. He could hardly believe the reality of what was there before him. He was sure that he had seen young Mr. Strathroy leave the house alive and well on the previous night, and yet, now, he lay silent in the cold embrace of death!

Vainly he asked himself if there was not some horrible mistake. But, no; the more he looked at the face of the dead, the surer he felt that it was the face of Allyne Strathroy. There was the same dark-brown hair, the same olive-tinged skin. There could be no mistake.

But when he heard John Duke, the Slasher, give his testimony, when he heard him declare that the murdered man was called James Kidd, and that he had been with him on the previous night from eight to nine o'clock, he could hardly believe his hearing.

It then was plainly evident that the dead man could not be Allyne Strathroy, and yet, despite the testimony, he it was. Could there be two men in the world who looked so much alike that one could not be told from the other? The actor started, trembled violently as a thought flashed through his mind.

He beheld, as by a lightning-flash, the stranger whom he had asked for alms, and who had repulsed him the previous evening—so very like, in voice and person, to Allyne Strathroy. It was plain to him now. He stood by the body of that man, and yet—yet—he knew not what to think. His eyes said yes—his instincts said no.

The coroner's jury heard all the testimony that was offered—and little enough it was—and returned a verdict that, "the deceased, James Kidd, had met his death by a knife-stab at the hand or hands of parties unknown."

And so James Kidd went to his grave, unwept and unhonored—the mystery of the manner of his death safe in the breast of his destroyer.

Mordaunt went from the moldy-smelling room into the clear sunlight with bewildered senses. He was conscious that he had become entangled in the threads of some dark mystery.

Had Fate tured his feet down that street the previous night that he might become linked, in some subtle manner, with a living tragedy?

He gazed at his hands, as if fearing to find upon them the blood-stain; but they were thin and white, and trembled visibly. But, even as he looked, there in the air he saw the image of another hand, as beautiful as his own, but red as blood!

He closed his eyes in dread and fear; and when he looked again it was gone.

Was it the hallucination of a disordered brain? he asked, as he walked slowly down the street.

"I shall never believe that I have not looked upon the dead body of Allyne Strathroy until I see Allyne Strathroy living," he muttered, as he walked slowly along.

He drew forth from his pocket the card on which was given the name and residence of the young man.

"I'll go and see this young man, this very afternoon; then my mind will be satisfied." And having come to this conclusion, Mordaunt proceeded to the Bowery in search of a cheap eating-house where he might procure a breakfast.

After the jury had decided upon their verdict, Duke, the Slasher, also sought the street. In his testimony he had not mentioned the letter addressed to Allyne Strathroy and signed Williams, that he had found under the table in the room of the murdered man. He had kept that knowledge to himself.

The canceled stamp upon the envelope showed that the letter had been delivered. Therefore, it was a reasonable supposition that Strathroy, himself, had brought the letter to the room, and accidentally dropped it there.

Why, if I can only frighten him—if he had any thing to do with it—it will be a small fortune to me," muttered Duke, as he stumbled along.

CHAPTER VI.

ALLYNE'S wound troubled him so little that the next morning after he had received it, when Angus came to ask if he would like his breakfast served in his room, he answered in the negative and said he would breakfast with the family.

So, Allyne desired Angus to assist him to dress.

After Allyne had finished dressing he was seized by a sudden fancy.

"Is breakfast ready?" he asked.

"Not quite, sir."

"I wish you would shave me, then," my hand, I fear, is unsteady," Allyne said.

"Certainly, sir," Angus replied.

And so the young man was shaved, and, much to the surprise of the old servant, he had his mustache and imperial taken off, so that his face was as smooth as the face of a young girl.

"It makes you look quite odd, sir," said the servant, after he had finished.

"Do you think so?" Allyne asked, surveying himself in the mirror.

And, indeed, it had produced a wondrous change in the appearance of his face, making him look at least five years younger, and quite boyish.

"Yes," at the first glance one would hardly know you," Angus returned; "and you are quite pale, too, which makes you look different."

"Yes; the loss of blood, I suppose," said the young man, carelessly.

"I feel quite weak this morning. Let me have your arm in going down-stairs. I may have another fainting-fit."

So, leaning on the arm of Angus, the young man descended to the breakfast-room.

He found his aunt, Miss Strathroy, and Blanche already at table, waiting for him.

"I hope your wound is not severe, Allyne," said the old lady, looking with some little astonishment at the change in the young man's appearance.

"It is nothing but a scratch," he said, seating himself at the table.

"Do you notice the alteration?" he asked.

"Why, Allyne, what possessed you to shave off your mustache?" asked Blanche, in wonder.

"A fancy; that's all," he answered, lightly.

"It makes you look so different, one would hardly know you."

"It is the paleness produced by my wound that alters me so much," he said.

During the breakfast Allyne was silent and abstracted. Both the ladies ascribed his silence to the pain he was suffering; both believing the wound to be much more serious than it was in reality.

After breakfast the three sat in the small sitting-room—Allyne comfortably lounging on a sofa.

"How did you receive your hurt, Allyne?" asked Blanche, her eyes beaming full of sympathy for her intended husband.

"I was attacked by a party of ruffians just as I turned into the avenue. They evidently intended robbery. As I was passing, one of them struck at me with his knife. I perceived the motion and threw my arm up, thus, in a measure, warding off the blow, but the point of the knife cut me. Just as they were about to renew the attack, they heard the rap of a policeman's club, and, taking the alarm, fled."

"What a wonderful escape!" exclaimed the old lady.

"The young man told the story of the attack as easily and naturally as possible. His hearers little guessed that they were listening to a fiction; and that no such event had occurred.

Allyne was strangely silent all the morning, contenting himself with merely saying "yes" or "no," and gazing into Blanche's face with an odd, strange, lingering look that she could not understand.

Allyne never before had gazed at her in such a way.

After dinner, Allyne was surprised to receive a message that a shabbily-dressed man at the door wished to see him in person, and that he came by appointment.

"Show him into the parlor," said Allyne to the servant, a troubled expression upon his brow.

"Tell him that I will see him in a moment."

The servant departed with the message, and the visitor, who was no other than the broken-down actor, Edmund Mordaunt, was shown into the parlor and desired to wait there.

"Ah!" muttered Mordaunt, as he entered the richly-furnished room, "this is a style. I haven't seen any thing of this sort for some time. Green and gold. Why, there's been money enough spent on this parlor to keep me a year! That's the way the world goes. A tenth part roll in their carriages, while the other nine-tenths slave from morn to night for a crust of bread and a drink of water. Oh, that we, the hewers of wood and drawers of water, were swept away, that the proud might learn what this world would be without us! If these rich men only would give a little of their hoarded store, there would be but little suffering in this world."

Mordaunt sat himself down in a luxurious arm-chair.

"This is what I call comfortable!" he cried, as he surveyed his surroundings.

Then the door opened, and Allyne Strathroy entered the parlor.

Mordaunt rose instantly to his feet and gazed intently upon the pale face of the young man, who had altered so strangely in the single night.

"It is Allyne Strathroy," murmured Mordaunt, to himself, softly; "but heavens, how changed!"

Allyne on his part made no sign of recognition.

"I believe you stated that you came by appointment, sir," the young man said, apparently costing him a great effort to speak.

Mordaunt started when the tones of the young man's voice fell upon his ears. Evidently something in the voice puzzled him.

"Yes, sir," the actor said; "you remember last night, meeting me on Broadway's you gave me a five-dollar bill and desired me to call upon you to-day. Here's the card you gave me."

Then Allyne seemed to remember, for it was plainly evident that he had forgotten the actor entirely.

"Oh, yes; it was near Leonard street, if I remember," he said, taking the card from Mordaunt's hand and putting it carefully in his pocket.

"Yes, sir," replied the actor, a bewildered look upon his face.

"I—I met with a slight accident last night," said Allyne, in some little confusion; "it has affected my head a little, I think. You see how pale I am?"

"Yes, you are looking quite ill," replied Mordaunt.

"Let me see; I believe I promised that I would assist you; did I not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I will keep that promise."

"I am very much obliged to you, sir," said the broken-down man, in a thoughtful voice.

"But, Mr. Strathroy," said Mordaunt, suddenly, "I've something that I think I ought to tell you. It may concern you, sir. It seems like a terrible mystery to me, but perhaps you may know something in regard to the affair that will make it all clear to you."

Allyne shot a glance into the speaker's face, quick and penetrating, from beneath his drooping eyelids. Strange, hard lines appeared for an instant about the corners of his handsome mouth; then a look of weariness came on the pale face.

"Be seated, sir," he said, extending his hand to a chair while he sank into one himself.

"Now, sir, go on."

"If you remember, sir," said Mordaunt, taking the seat indicated by the hand of the young man, but never for a moment removing his eyes from the pale face before him, not an expression of which escaped him, "I asked you last night when we spoke together on Broadway, and you were kind enough to aid me, if you had not passed me about an hour before, dressed roughly in a pea-jacket and a slouched hat?"

"Yes," said Allyne, slowly, "I remember."

"Then I told you that a man had passed me about an hour before that time, dressed as I described, and that that man had your face, your hair, your eyes, in fact, in all but the voice—which was harsher than yours—this man was the very image of you."

"Yes, I remember," again said the young man, without a single sign of emotion upon his face.

"The circumstance puzzled me a great deal," continued Mordaunt. "I could not understand the apprehension of danger that seemed to fill my mind—not of danger to myself, but of danger to you, and coming from this man who bore such a wonderful resemblance to yourself."

Allyne started when these words fell upon his ears. His pale face became still paler, and a livid light shot from his eyes.

"I can not understand this," he said, speaking slowly, and with apparent difficulty.

Not a single change of the young man's face escaped the sunken but inquiring eyes of the actor.

"I went to bed, but in my dreams even, this man, and yourself were ever before me," continued Mordaunt. "This morning, on going out, my attention was attracted by a crowd collected around a wooden-house opposite. I inquired the reason of the crowd and was told that in the night a murder had been committed in the house."

"Ah!" Slowly came the exclamation from the pallid lips of the young man, and he fixed his eyes upon the face of the actor with a searching intensity.

"Excited by a curiosity that I could neither account for nor restrain, I entered the house and looked upon the features of the dead man. He had been killed by a single knife-stab through the heart. A single wound only. Judge of my astonishment, when I looked upon that man's face, rigid in death, to behold your features, your exact counterpart!"

"It is very strange," said Allyne, slowly, a strong glare now settling in his eyes.

"Yes, I would have taken my oath that this man was you. In fact, I could not believe that you were living until I saw you," said Mordaunt, impressively.

"It is probably but one of those incomprehensible coincidences that sometimes occur in the world—an accidental resemblance, that is all," replied Allyne, with a gleam under his half-shut eyelids, that made his eyes look like steel.

For a moment, Mordaunt gazed into those eyes; that moment's gaze served to seal a horrible suspicion in the mind of the actor. Once more that scarlet hand flashed up in the air, midway between the two men, and in the eyes of Allyne the actor saw a demon's glare.

The actor closed his lids as if to shut out a horrifying sight. When he gazed again the Phantom Hand was gone.

"Can you guess a solution to this riddle?" Allyne asked, slowly and carelessly.

"I am not good at guessing," said Mordaunt, dropping his gaze to the floor, for he felt that his eyes were betraying him.

For a moment Allyne looked upon him as if endeavoring to read his soul in his face.

CHAPTER VII.

GUARDING AGAINST DANGER.

"As I have said, it is merely a coincidence—a remarkable one, truly, but still, nothing more," Allyne continued, in the same calm tone that he had used during the whole interview.

"I thought it but right that you should know of it," observed Mordaunt, who knew but too well that he had made a foe of the man before him by making the disclosure that he had. And yet, what reason had Allyne Strathroy either to hate or fear him? There was but one answer; and that single answer told of a scarlet crime and a scarlet hand.

"You have acted rightly," said Allyne; "I shall not forget your kindness."

There was a tone of bitterness—nay, of menace in the young man's voice that made a cold shiver creep over Mordaunt.

"Now, let me see what I can do for you. You are in want. Suppose I give you a hundred dollars; will that relieve you?" Allyne asked.

"I should not ask you for such a sum as that," the actor said, in wonder at the young man's liberality, and yet with an unpleasant suspicion that it concealed some subtle purpose.

"I shall give it to you without asking," Allyne said, with a smile. It was the first that had appeared on his pale face during the interview.

"Wait here for a moment, please, and I will get the money," continued the young man. Then he rose and left the room.

Mordaunt's brain was in a whirl. He could not understand this strange entanglement which seemed to be winding itself more and more around him.

If the horrible suspicion that had entered his mind in regard to Allyne Strathroy had even a shadow of truth, was it not his duty to denounce him to justice, instead of accepting his bounty? But then the actor thought of the odds against him. How could he prove his suspicion to be well founded? This man was rich; he, the actor, was poor. That gold was an irresistible agent for either aiding or defeating justice in New York, the shrewd man of the world well knew.

Then another question presented itself. Possibly this hundred dollars was intended for a bribe to keep him from looking deeper into this mysterious affair?

The return of Allyne, after some ten minutes' absence, put an end to the reflections of the visitor.

"Here is a hundred dollars," said Allyne, handing two fifty-dollar bills to Mordaunt.

"Use this money prudently and it will give you a start in the world again and relieve you from the disagreeable necessity of asking aid from any one."

The tone of the young man was so candid—his manner so generous and open-hearted, that, for a moment, all the suspicions of Mordaunt vanished. He felt as if he had been under the influence of a horrible dream.

The poor broken-down wreck of a man could hardly stammer out his thanks at this generous liberality.

"Oh, don't speak of it," said the young man, in a careless, off-hand way; "you may be able to repay me some day." Then casting a glance in the face of the other, he noticed how worn and haggard it looked.

"Take a glass of wine before you go," he said, kindly. And without waiting for a reply he went into the entry, and in a moment returned with a little tray containing two wine-glasses brimming full of rich, fruity port.

The grateful incense of the rare old wine commended itself swiftly to the always thirsty throat of him who had wrecked his life by drink.

Allyne sat the tray down on the center-table, and pushed one of the glasses toward Mordaunt while he took the other.

"Drink to your better fortune," he said, gayly. The actor did not wait for a second bidding but eagerly drained the glass.

There was a gleam upon the face of Allyne as he watched the actor gulp down the wine at a single swallow.

"When you need assistance come to me again," Allyne said as Mordaunt departed. The voice rang like a note of mockery in the ears of the departing man.

Mordaunt went down the avenue, turned into Twenty-sixth street, and walked toward Third avenue, which he intended to follow down-town.

"I am sorely puzzled," he murmured, as he walked onward. "Can I suspect a man who treats me like a brother?"

Then Mordaunt began to have a queer sensation about the head.

"I have been drinking bad whisky so long that this pure, rich wine affects me strangely."

And as he walked on his head became worse and worse. It swam round like a top, and, by the time he had reached Third avenue, he was reeling like a drunken man.

"Oh, heaven!" cried the actor, in dismay, and feeling deathly sick, "what is the matter with me? I can not be drunk on a single glass of wine. My throat is on fire. I am burning up inside!"

Mordaunt staggered to a door stoop, and fell rather than sat down upon it. Burning fires were in every vein; his strength seemed gone; weird images floated before his eyes; cold drops of perspiration rolled from his fevered brow.

"Oh!" he groaned in anguish, "I am dying—dying like a dog in the streets. Oh, my God! have mercy on me!" he almost shrieked, as the death-pangs racked and tore him.

"Say, cap, what's the matter?" asked a rough, honest voice, close to the elbow of the sick man.

The voice came from a street vender, who, walking along beside his cart, bawling, "Pea-ters, here yer are!" at the top of his voice, had noticed the ailing man upon the stoop.

Pony Moore—such was the name of the street-vender, given him probably on account of his stunted figure, that made up in breadth what it lacked in size—was a thorough New York "boy"—a representative of a great class peculiar to New York city, who are known under the general name of licensed-venders, and who travel about the city with a wagon, more or less dilapidated, drawn by some wretched specimen of horse-flesh generally, and sell any thing in the way of fruit or vegetables on which they can make a living profit.

Pony was a good-hearted fellow, despite his looks, for he resembled a prize-fighter, with his jet-black hair cropped tight to his head, his bristling mustache of the same hue as his hair, and his complexion that resembled a raw beefsteak. His attention had been attracted by the agony exhibited upon the face of the unfortunate actor.

"Say, cap, are you sick? Whoa, January!" This last remark was addressed to the animal who drew the wagon of the vender, and who showed a disposition to go on without waiting for his master—a proceeding that aroused the ire of that worthy.

"I am very sick," murmured the actor, in great pain. "I feel as if I were burning up inside."

"Let me run you into this shot-i-carry-an' let him 'pison yer," said the kind-hearted Pony, assisting the actor to his feet. A drug-gist-shop was but two doors above.

"Say, January, jist you keep quiet, 'cos I'll walk into yer affections lively if you don't! Jist hold on to me, cap," said Pony, after delivering the parting injunction to his horse.

The street-vender conducted the almost helpless man into the drug-gist-shop.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 20.)

The Masked Miner:

THE IRON-MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER.

A TALE OF PITTSBURGH.

BY WM. MASON TURNER.

CHAPTER XVII.

TOM WORTH'S TWO VISITORS.

ON the afternoon of the day, the night succeeding which, with its startling events, has been given in the foregoing chapter, Tom Worth sat sad and lonesome in his cell.

The creeping wind on the outside forced itself through the narrow grating, high above him on a level with the ground, and chilled the damp apartment.

The prisoner sat with his back against his little bed, with a blanket thrown over his shoulders. As usual he had been writing; but the gloom of an early evening had settled down, obscuring the light, so that he could no longer discern the characters he was tracing. So, the prisoner had pushed the written sheets back on the little table, and was now seated, buried in thought.

What the miner was cogitating about, can only be inferred from the nature of his situation, the depressing circumstances surrounding him, and the grave charges against him—for the which, he was now confined to the limits of four damp walls.

Tom Worth was a man who did not deal in soliloquy, but one who rather occupied his time in thinking—in linking this thought into that inference—deducing this conclusion from that premise, and making a brief, rapid summary from the whole.

On this particular evening, the man's face was dejected—more so than it had been since the day of his appearance before the alderman; for now, with the expression of deep thought, that habitually marked his countenance, there was unmistakably commingled an air of dejection—or anxious, brooding care.

"Would to God I were certain before I make my move! Seeing is believing, beyond a doubt; and there is something to be unmasked!" He talked as if in a dream.

He said nothing more, but bent his head in thought again. An hour passed, when the door was opened, and the jailer appeared.

"I come to tell you, Tom," he said, kindly, "that I have brought your friend to see you again. I have searched him. By orders received to-day, visitors may be allowed to remain with you half an hour."

"Thank you, kindly, my good man," said Tom, rising to his feet.

In another moment, old Ben Walford, almost too full to speak, entered the cell, and as the old man and the young met, in a strong, soul-yearning embrace, the jailer stole silently away.

Glorious privilege for the poor prisoner! glorious privilege, too, for the honest friend, the sterling man, old Ben Walford, the sooty miner!

For several moments the two remained locked in the warm embrace; and then seated themselves side by side.

"God help you, Ben, my dear friend! You, alone, are a friend to me now!"

"I am a friend to you, my dear boy, and there's no man in the mines that will dare gainsay it. But then, Tom, you have other good friends—and in the mines, too; and hark you, my boy, in your ear: say the word yourself, and they'll show it."

"I understand you, Ben," said the prisoner, after a pause; "but I can not consent to it. It would be setting law at defiance; it would be an acknowledgment of guilt! I can not consent."

"As you say, Tom!" replied the old man, at once; but then he added, half defiantly—"though, if you would jist hint such a thing, Tom, we would tear this old jail down, stone by stone, to get you out! Another thing, Tom: that broadcloth rascal, Fairleigh Somerville, daresn't show his ugly face near the breaker of the Black Diamond! Even Mr. Hayhurst has promised him a mauling!"

"No violence, Ben, no violence, for, in the end, it would injure me. Be calm, be cool, be temperate, for I am to be tried."

"Yes, yes, Tom, but by the Eternal Pillars! you are innocent—innocent of this rascality, Tom, and we all know it!"

"Nay, nay, Ben, but it must be proved on the day of trial," said the prisoner, vehemently.

"And that lying, toll-keeper, Markley," continued the old man, "came near getting a thrashing from our engineer."

"Do not blame Markley, either, Ben. I am convinced he was a friend of mine, and I believe he told the truth, to the best of his ability."

"What! Why, Tom! This is worse than taking bail!" exclaimed the old man, with an irrepressible indignation.

"You don't pretend to say that Edward Markley saw you that night, in the wagon?"

But Tom Worth did not choose to answer this question; he cast his eyes up, as if in a dream. And then, as if communing with himself, he said, slowly: "Oh, and of all!"

"Tis strange! very strange, that—"

"Infernal strange, I tell you, Tom, for you to talk so! I do hope you won't make old Ben Walford ashamed of you!"

Like lightning Tom Worth turned upon him.

"Trust me for that, my friend!" he exclaimed. "I will stand my trial, and mark me, I shall be acquitted! And yet, to that end, God will have to assist me! But Ben, your time is fast passing away. I wish to say a few words to you—words of importance."

He paused.

"I am listening, Tom, and will treasure up every word," and the old man drew nearer to his friend.

"Well, Ben," began the other, in a low voice, "there is a piece of rascality afoot in this city, with which it may be that I have become entangled."

He paused.

"What mean you, Tom?" asked the old man.

"Do you know, Boyd's Hill?" asked the other, in the same low tone, without heeding old Ben's question.

"Every inch of it! Why?"

"Just back of the cliff, not far from the head of Stephenson street, there is an old house, which I—"

his voice sunk so low, that old Ben had to lean over to listen; and then an animated, earnest conversation ensued between the friends.

When this consultation—we might term it—ended, old Ben sat for a moment, without speaking, and then rising slowly to his feet, said in a deep, determined voice:

"Trust me, Tom; I will watch well."

And—

Just then, faintly and indistinctly, were heard heavy footsteps approaching—this time, as before, confused.

The footfalls paused before the cell of Tom Worth; the key grated in the lock;

the bar rattled down, and the door was opened.

"Your time is up, sir," said the jailer to old Ben; "but, Tom," addressing the prisoner, "I have brought you more company."

For a moment the two miners stood, hand clasped in hand, and then old Ben, with a half-sigh, turned abruptly and left the room.

The jailer immediately closed and locked the door, and walked away.

The cell was now very gloomy, almost dark, and Tom Worth, as he turned to his new visitor, did not recognize him.

He was a tall, portly man, with a long silver-white beard, covering his face entirely. The man was clad in large, loosely-fitting garments—evidently, by their peculiar cut, of common material.

"Well, sir," said the miner, a little harshly, "what business have you with me? the hour is late."

"What business? That's good," said the other, straightening himself up, with dignity.

As he heard the voice of the visitor, the miner started as if shot through the heart.

"Mr. Harley! you here?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, yes, my man, I am here; but, for God's sake, do not speak so loud! I do not wish my name known. Don't you see that I am in disguise?"

"Yes, truly, I do see it," said the miner, slowly; "and again I ask, what business have you in my cell? I am a prisoner now, sir."

"Tom Worth, I have heard your voice before," his strangely familiar.

"You have heard it, sir, in your library and in the alderman's office. But speak, sir, what business have you here?"

"All then, Tom, guilty or not guilty of abducting my daughter—poor child—I am sure you know something of her whereabouts."

"Upon what do you base such an opinion, sir?" asked the other, as a brown came over his face.

"Upon what you hinted at in my library. And now, I am here with gold—a large amount—to buy your secret; to—"

"Enough, old man!" suddenly cried the miner, his tall form dilating, and towering to a greater height than ever; "enough, or you'll craze me! You refused to hear my suspicions, they were nothing more; you mocked and insulted me when I was in the grasp of the law; you believed me guilty of this dastardly act, when, God knows, I would have died for your daughter; and now sir, you sneak in here, under cover of night, and hidden in a disguise, afraid that you will taint your name! Come here to buy from me, my secret! No, sir! I hold no secret from you or from any man, and in the court-room, when the day comes, I shall have justice! As for your gold—bah! I despise it, as I content and spit upon you for your own cringing conduct! You have my answer, and I prefer to be alone!"

Five minutes afterward old Richard Harley, wretched, chafed, and miserable, emerged from the rear-door of the jail, slunk down into Grant street, and, when just below the Cathedral, entered his carriage, there awaiting him, and was driven rapidly over the river.

CHAPTER XVIII.
DARK DEEDS.

GRACE HARLEY, with bated breath, sunk back on the sofa, as the door slowly opened. She gave a quick, covert glance thitherward, as the raw night-wind crept in; and though, at such an hour, she could expect no other, yet she started convulsively as the loathsome villain who had insured her appeared.

His bearded face, the wide, drooping slouch hat, drawn over the dark brow, yet permitting the fiery eyes beneath to burn and flash out—the long coarse overcoat, concealing all shape to his person—all betokened the same unwelcome visitor—the same unprincipled scoundrel, whose purpose was now fully apparent.

Grace Harley was a bold and determined girl, when driven to desperation; her danger now was that she had been driven almost beyond despair, and was likely to succumb from the very subsidence of despair.

As the man quickly entered, and closed the door behind him, he approached her. But, in an instant, she sprung to her feet, thrust her hand in her bosom, causing the newspaper, nestled there, to rattle—and drew forth a keen flashing dagger.

"Stand back, villain!" she exclaimed, raising the blade high in the air, in her nervous grip; "I have cast aside the spike since I have found this better weapon—this, perhaps an evidence of other crimes of yours—and I'll die—Stand back, I say!" and her eyes gleamed with a look of determination.

The man recoiled violently, as he saw the bright, keen blade glitter in the full blaze of the chandelier, and, coward-like, his own hand sought the heavy butt of a pistol, protruding from his overcoat pocket. Advancing a stride, he half drew the weapon from his pocket. The knife, however, averted him, and he paused.

"Villain! that you are!" exclaimed the maiden, "draw your pistol and murder a defenseless woman! Death at any time is preferable to confinement here, and I doubt not you can play the role of murderer well; 'tis only a degree beyond what you already have done."

Half-frenzied, the man drew the pistol from his pocket, but almost instantly, let it

drop again. As he did so, the girl caught a glimpse of his ungloved hand, and she saw a glittering jewel flash for an instant from that hand. Grace crouched against the wall; a shudder shook her form; a deathly pallor took possession of her already wan cheek.

But the man knew not the cause of this sudden change, nor did he care for it.

"You need not be alarmed, Grace Harley!" he said, in a harsh voice; "I do not come to annoy you, to-night. I am here only for a few moments on business. Besides, my sweet one, I have other and more important work on my hands. But—"

he advanced toward her again—"you must be blindfolded. I wish to consult some papers here, and look into some matters which it were well you should not see. I must do it!" and he continued to advance.

"Stand back, sir!" exclaimed the girl. "I'll die before your polluted hands shall touch me!"

"Can you not believe me when I swear to you that I will not harm you? There, I cast my pistol from me!" and he tossed the weapon on the center-table behind him.

"Now, let me place the bandage over your eyes."

"Never! never! so help me God!" and the girl still opposed to him a bold, unflinching front.

The man's eyes glittered fire; his hands gripped together, fiercely, and a furious oath of anger burst from his lips.

"Then, by Jove! I'll shoot you through the arm, and bind you by force, for you shall be blindfolded!" As he spoke, he snatched the pistol, cocked it, and was about to aim.

For a moment the girl stood firm, unmoved; then, as a faint trembling came over her, she said, in a low, half-appealing voice: "No! no! If you shoot me at all, let it be through the heart. I will apply the bandage to my eyes until you yourself are satisfied. Only give me your pistol, that I may be safe against treachery!"

The man hesitated.

"If you will swear solemnly by heaven and hell!" at length he said, coarsely, "that you will not take an undue advantage—that you will again, at the proper time, place the pistol in my hand, and that you will not remove the bandage until I am gone, I will do as you say."

Though after thought passed like lightning through the young girl's bosom. Were she to accede to those terms, she might place herself irretrievably in the power of the villain; if she refused to accede to those conditions, he might proceed to violence—the result of which she would not trust herself, even for a moment, to contemplate.

She saw, too, by the man's manner, that beyond a doubt he was in a hurry, and that he was, to a certain extent, telling the truth.

She concluded to accept his terms, as he had acquiesced in hers.

"It shall be as you say," she at length murmured, in a low tone; "and right or wrong I'll trust you this time."

The man seemed somewhat softened, for he replied in a more conciliatory tone.

"You shall not be deceived; but hurry, and—here is the pistol!" As he spoke, he advanced, and placed the deadly firearm in her hands.

The girl slipped the weapon, with its cold steel barrel, into her warm, palpitating bosom, and then, without a moment's hesitation, unwound the thick shawl from her shoulders, and folding it in several plaits, covered her eyes with it effectually. Then drawing the pistol from her bosom, she sat down composedly upon the sofa.

"'Tis all right," said the man. "Now turn your face to the north—that is to your left hand. So!" he said, as the girl obeyed him, unhesitatingly.

For several moments there was a silence in the room. Naught but the roaring wind without, sounding ominous, and preternaturally clear, could be heard.

The man turned toward the further side of the room, and, as if "to make assurance doubly sure," he drew a screen between him and the girl, who sat motionless on the sofa. But he allowed the gas to stream on as ever.

He drew near a low sideboard, opened it and took therefrom a cut-glass decanter. He waited not for a tumbler or goblet, but placed the vessel to his mouth and drank deeply. Then he replaced the bottle, locked the sideboard and rose to his feet.

"Now—now!" he muttered to himself; "I am strong—and look—nay, I must look at my King of Terrors, and prove to him that I am king—not he!"

He approached the wall as before, found the concealed spring and pressed on it.

The section of the wall sunk obediently—slowly—slowly, and then the ghastly sight came into view.

A half-cry almost burst from the man as he gazed at the glistening skeleton lying there so quietly—so awfully! Then he sought and found the other spring, and aided the wall in regaining its position as before.

Without more ado, he turned, hurried the screen to one side and walked up to the maiden.

"Give me the pistol, Grace Harley," he said, in a low, quivering voice; "then wait until you hear the door shut. Then you are at liberty to remove the bandage."

The girl obediently held the weapon out toward him. For a moment he gazed at

her, sitting so motionless, so trustfully, then turning abruptly, left the room.

Grace hearing the heavy bolt of the lock slide into its socket, removed the bandage. But no unusual sight met her eye.

Ten minutes, fifteen, twenty, a half-hour passed, and Grace still sat where her strange visitor had left her. She glanced around the room to see if the man had left any trace, telling of what he had been doing.

But every thing was in order; nothing was disturbed. The chairs were in their usual places, the sofa and center-table also. The pictures on the wall—Ha! the wall!

What was that ominous-looking crevice on the side opposite her? She had never noticed it before. It was a narrow seam, about half an inch in width, extending six feet across the wall, at right angles. Below and above this seam the rich velvet paper showed its cut edge. Singular!

The girl rose to her feet, and, with awe and trembling, drew near the mysterious crevice.

Grace paused as she neared the fissure, and glanced tremblingly around her. Summoning her courage, she suddenly drew a chair to the wall, mounted it, and peered into the narrow aperture. She could discover nothing—could determine nothing, save that there was a black, cavernous depth inside the place, and that there issued therefrom a foul, musty odor. The girl drew back; her limbs were tottering under her, but, resting a moment, her courage and determination returned.

She drew the dagger from her bosom, and placing it in the crevice, bore her weight, gently at first, upon it—then with more force.

The wall yielded slowly—slowly—the cavernous opening enlarged. The maiden paused, and peered in; still, nothing could be discerned.

The wind roared wildly without, and bellowed hoarsely down the tall chimney.

The girl pressed her hand on the wall, while, with the other, she still bore down with the dagger. Suddenly, from some impulse, the section shot rapidly up into its place—there was a creaking, as of chains and pulleys. The section closed with a sharp, clicking sound, and the dagger, broken in twain by the blow, fell to the floor.

With a wild cry of terror, the maiden reeled backward, slipped from the chair, and dropped like lead upon the rich carpet of the apartment.

CHAPTER XIX.
THE POWER OF GOLD.

LONG hours passed before Grace Harley, recovered from the terrible shock she had experienced at beholding the startling secret in the wall. It was certainly some time after day next morning when she knew herself again; for she could hear the far-off rumbles of the city betokening the resumption of business. Now and then, too, she could see faint flashes of sunlight struggling through the door-cracks.

The truth is, that, so benumbing was the shock which the girl had sustained, she had passed from a state of temporary unconsciousness to the deep, unbroken quiet of a settled slumber. She had slept the long night through on the floor where she had fallen.

She awoke with a start, and gazed about her for a moment, ere she could recognize her position, for, since her detention in the old house, she always slept on the sofa, at the southernmost side of the apartment. Gradually she recalled the circumstances of the previous evening, and then, like lightning, she felt in her bosom. A smile of satisfaction flitted over her pallid face, as the concealed newspaper crumpled and rattled under her hand. She arose, and taking the paper from its hiding-place, drew her chair directly beneath the chandelier, the jets in which were still burning brightly.

Seating herself hastily, she spread out the paper, and hunted through it for the paragraph which, on the evening before, had arrested her attention.

The paper was the *Gazette*, and it was dated two days after the night of the adventure on the heights of Mount Washington.

The girl gave a quick start as the particular lines soon again caught her eye. Then, in a low, hesitating voice, she read aloud:

"THE ABDUCTION CASE.—In our issue of yesterday we referred to the high-handed outrage, perpetrated in our very midst—the abduction of Miss Harley, only child of Richard Harley, Esq., of Alleghany city. Since then, considerable light has been thrown upon the dark transaction. The evidence elicited before Alderman March, yesterday afternoon, seems to fix the guilt—or, at least, a goodly portion of it—on Tom Worth, the miner, employed in the famous Black Diamond mine. On an investigation of the circumstances, this man does not prove to be the hero he was first thought to be. It appears that he was absent from his work and his cabin, without a satisfactory reason, for some time, both before and after the abduction; and the plain, straightforward evidence of Mr. Markley—a toll-keeper on the Smithfield street bridge—seems, beyond a doubt, to fasten the guilt upon the miner."

"This man, Tom Worth, strange to say, has borne a high character for honesty and sobriety, and was well vouched for by our friend, Mr. Hayhurst, the overseer of the mine, and pertinaciously so, by an old man, named Ben Walford, a fellow-workman in the Black Diamond. The devotion of this old man to his guilty friend, the prisoner, was very touching; it was worthy of a nobler subject. Too much commendation, in regard to the solution of this affair, can not be

awarded our gifted young townsman, Fairleigh Somerville, Esq.; it was owing to his efforts and untiring diligence that the arrest of the offender was effected. Another strange feature of this case is, that the prisoner, though offered bail, refused it peremptorily. Thus far he declines to admit that he was implicated in the matter, or that he knows any thing of the whereabouts of the young lady. However, he is safely lodged in jail, to await his trial, when, it is to be hoped that, if found guilty of this cowardly crime, he will have meted out to him a punishment suited to his deserts."

In the mean time the sympathies of the community are with the bereaved father, who is almost crushed beneath the heavy misfortune.

The paper fell from the girl's hands, and Grace Harley's head sunk on her bosom.

"God in heaven!" she murmured. "Can my terrible suspicions be correct? Can it be he—the deep-dyed villain! Poor, poor papa! and I know I can not be far away from him; and, yet, I know not. Tom Worth! and that noble form, so like—My God! a wild hope—nay! nay! and, if it were, alas! alas! A bright hope—good heavens!—yes—yes—my watch—yes—I have it here—and—God be with me! I'll try! Ben Walford, his friend? Oh! he can not be guilty, and, yet, how can I communicate with him? God aid and help me! Do I see light ahead, and—"

"Sh! sh! here he comes—my jailer. He is kind to me; be brave, my heart!"

The girl crushed the newspaper back into her bosom, and retreated hastily to the sofa.

Steps sounded without; a key grated harshly in the lock; the door opened.

A tall, heavy man, his face muffled in a large woolen comforter, his hat drawn lightly over his eyes, entered. In one hand he carried a basket covered with a towel.

"Well, Miss," he said, in a kind voice, "how are you this morning? Hope you're well, ma'am?"

"Thank you, my good man; I am not well." They were the first words she had spoken to him, or he to her.

"Sorry, ma'am; and—I am going to leave you, ma'am."

"To leave me, my good man? What do you mean?" And she looked at him wonderingly.

"Why, ma'am, to-night will be the last time I'll bring your meals to you."

"Ah! then I am to be released?" she exclaimed, half rising to her feet, as a sudden gleam of hope flashed over her face, and sparkled in her eyes.

The man was softened by that appealing look, but he shook his head sadly.

"No, no, ma'am; some one else will take my place; and then the boss, you know, ma'am."

"Oh! God!" groaned the girl.

"I am very sorry for you, ma'am," said the man, feelingly; "for, ma'am, I have a wife and 'little' ones, and, Miss, I wasn't always a bad man!"

"The girl looked hastily up at him.

"Tell me, my good man," she suddenly asked, "why am I kept here? Tell me, for I have never harmed you!"

"What you are here for, ma'am!" exclaimed the man, starting back. "No, no, ma'am; I can not tell you that!"

A moment of silence ensued, during which time the man busied himself in taking the girl's breakfast from the basket, and placing it upon the center-table.

Grace Harley glanced at him.

"I wish to speak with you, my man," she said, softly; "and you spare a moment?"

The man hesitated.

"Yes, ma'am," at length he said; "I suppose I can."

The girl arose and approached him.

"You say you have a wife and children: I know by your tone that they are dear to you. For their sake, I beg you to do me a small favor."

She paused. The man was listening attentively.

"Furnish me with paper, ink, and envelope, and then promise to drop a letter in the post-office for me," and she looked at him pleadingly.

"No, no, ma'am! I can not—I dare not! My life wouldn't be worth a thought! No, no, ma'am! I am willing to serve you, but I dare not do that!"

"You dare not? Then it is fear that hinders you?"

"You are right, ma'am," was the reply.

"Then you shall run no risk; I pledge you my sacred word, as a God-fearing woman, never to hint to any one that you aided me, in case I ever get home."

The man paused.

"Will the letter be to your father?" he asked.

"No," was the prompt reply, and she still gazed at him.

"Let me think, ma'am," said the man, walking slowly up and down the room. "I am going away to-morrow morning any way—and he can't suspect me!" These words were spoken as if communing with himself.

He paused before the maiden.

"I don't know, ma'am, but what I might serve you. God knows you are treated badly. I could not help it!" He spoke earnestly.

"Heaven help you, my good man!" said the girl, deeply; "say that you will aid me now—you will get your reward!"

She took him appealingly by the arm. The man still hesitated, but then, turning toward her, said:

"You must promise me, ma'am, before God, that even to your dearest friend you will not hint that I have done this for you. Then tell me who the letter is for, and come what may, I'll accommodate you!"

"God bless you and yours forever, my good man!" murmured the girl, as she sunk back on the sofa.

"Say nothing about that, ma'am, and I'll go out after the paper. But I must be careful."

So saying he drew his woolen scarf more closely around his neck. In doing so, it became disengaged, and fell from his shoulder.

The girl caught a glimpse of his face. She started violently.

"Why, good heavens!" she exclaimed; "are you not Tom Worth, the miner?"

The man in his turn started, and hastily rearranged his scarf.

"Me, me, Tom Worth? Why, ma'am, Tom Worth is—but, I can't answer your questions—there! Now I'll go after the paper; I'll soon be back."

He opened the door softly, and putting his head forth, peeped around him. Then he cautiously slipped out, and closed the door.

He was gone about half an hour, when, Grace, who, in the mean time, had partaken sparingly of the breakfast before her, heard him coming back.

He soon afterward entered and closed the door.

"It's all right, ma'am," he said, as if pleased at his success; "I didn't have to go far. Here's the paper, ink, and all. Please be in a hurry, ma'am, for the boss might come, and then you know—"

"Yes, never fear, my good man," and the maiden seated herself at once by the table, and drew the writing material toward her. Her hand trembled as she grasped the pen.

The man had seated himself at some distance and was engaged in repacking the things in the basket.

Grace wrote rapidly. It was a brief letter. She read it over twice and inclosed it in an envelope. Then she hastily scribbled a few lines on a slip, folded it around the envelope, which was already directed, crowded all into another envelope, and directed it.

"'Tis ready," she said, in a tremulous voice. "For the sake of your dear wife and children, I beg you to put this, with your own hands, in the office."

"I'll do it, ma'am," was the prompt reply.

The man took the envelope, and without casting his eyes over the superscription, placed it carefully in the breast-pocket of his coat. He turned, picked up the basket, and was going, when Grace called to him:

"Here, my good man," and she took her watch from her bosom, and then a few gold coins from her pocket; "take these; 'tis all I can give you now, but you shall—"

"No, no, ma'am; I can not," said the man, firmly, at the same time putting aside the costly present; "it would not be honest, ma'am."

"But I beg you to take them," insisted the girl; "take them; I do not value them."

"I can not take the watch; it would be like stealing, ma'am," said the man; "but he hesitated, 'I am a poor man—an unfortunate one—and the money will be of service to poor Mary and the children. I'll take it, ma'am, if you are willing.'"

"I wish there was more of it—there," she said, eagerly forcing the coins into his hand. "But I shall not forget you. Good-by, and God be with you!"

"The same to you, ma'am, and from an honest heart!"

The man emphasized the last word; then he was gone.

A glow of happiness beamed over the maiden's face, and then she muttered:

"Can—oh! can it be done! Suppose I fail? Fail! I must not fail! And then, Ben Walford? Yes, yes, I'll trust him forever! I'll try the experiment now at once!" she exclaimed.

She cautiously drew near the door, and listened intently for a moment. All was quiet.

She turned at once, and going to a closet in the room, took out a large sheet of tissue-paper, very thin and light. Then, after searching around for a moment, she found a can.

She hastily tore off a piece of the paper, rolled it between her hands, loosely, in the shape of a ball; then, from the can, she sprinkled on it a few drops of the liquid it contained. Lighting the paper-ball by a match, she cast it all a-blaze up the chimney, and awaited breathlessly the result.

The flaming ball darted up, lightning-like, in the strong draught, and it did not return—not even the faintest cinder.

"Thank God!" muttered the girl, fervently; "it will do; Heaven has come to my aid!"

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 15.)

With this issue we give the closing chapters of the highly successful serials

The Ace of Spades,

The Shadowed Heart.

Few romances recently given have produced a finer impression. Pure in tone, healthy in motive, spirited and vigorous in narrative, they have charmed all classes, as we have abundant evidence to prove. Other works by the same pens are in our hands, as already announced, and readers of current literature may with confidence look to this paper for what is

BEST IN ROMANCE AND STORY!

seen better days; but now the old man was unable to work, and the daughter supported both on the scanty wages she received. She worked in a milliner store in Division street. "Poor girl!" cried the young man; "she must have a hard time of it."

"No doubt," replied the lawyer; "it is care and toil that have made her cheeks so pale."

Rosa was greatly astonished that afternoon when a man came to the door with a large basket full of jellies, oranges, grapes, and a dozen other little dainties so grateful to the palate of the sick, not forgetting a bottle of rich fruity wine. The man simply said that the basket was for Miss Pearl, from a friend, and departed.

Rosa, with tears in her eyes, thanked Heaven for the unexpected gift, and in her heart she wondered who could have thought of her in her distress.

She was still more astonished when a letter, containing a twenty-dollar bill, arrived the next morning. A few words only accompanied the money—"From a friend."

She began to think that some good angel was watching over her young life.

Then in the afternoon Albert Keene came in, "to see if the apartments needed any repairs," so he stated. His call was a long one, too, and before he left, Rosa had begun to look upon him as an old friend.

The young landlord repeated his visit, until, at last, hardly a day passed without bringing him, and Rosa soon learned to watch for his step upon the stairs.

At last the truth came to the young girl: she was loved—loved by Albert Keene. He showed that love in the earnest glance of his dark eyes, the warm pressure of the hand when he parted with her. And Keene, too, believed that Rosa loved him, for once she had returned the hand pressure, and he was happy—happy beyond expression.

Then came a sudden interruption to the love-dream of the two young hearts. Rosa's father, after a terrible night of agony, died, and before he died he made an awful disclosure to his child. His words made the girl's pale cheeks still paler, and drove all the hope from her heart, and left in its stead black despair.

After the burial of the old man, Keene was constant in his attentions. He came each evening and escorted Rosa from her shop to her home. But Rosa, the once gentle and loving girl, seemed changed into a statue—a living, breathing one—since the death of her father.

Keene was perplexed at the change. At first he had thought it grief at the death of her only parent; but, as time wore on, that grief did not abate. The young man was sorely puzzled. Rosa now seemed to wish to avoid him. Determined at last to learn his fate he took advantage of a favorable opportunity to speak.

It was a pleasant Sabbath evening, and Albert had come expressly to avow his love. "Rosa," he said, "I have something to say to you to-night that I have been trying to find courage to say for a long time. You must have guessed the truth long ago, for I have not tried to conceal my passion—I could not, if I wished to. Rosa, I love you with all my heart. Will you be my wife?"

Anxiously he waited for the girl's reply. A faint flush of color tinged the pale features, and for a moment she spoke not, but then, at length, apparently with a great effort, she answered:

"Have you considered the difference in our positions? You are a wealthy man, while I am only a poor girl."

"So much the better!" cried Keene, impulsively. "I can prove to you that I really do love you. Besides, money is not every thing in this world, though some think it is. I want you for my wife, not because you are either rich or poor, but because I love you."

"It is impossible; I can never be your wife," said the girl, sadly.

"You do not love me?"

"I did not say that!" replied Rosa, quickly. "Then, if you love me, why not be my wife?"

"Because I have resolved not to," said the girl, firmly.

"And why?" asked Keene, in amazement.

"Because your father ruined mine—crushed all his life—made him die almost a beggar," said Rosa.

"I do not understand!" exclaimed the young man, unable to guess this strange riddle.

"I will tell you," said the girl. "Just before my father died, he called me to his bedside—asked me if I loved you, and when I confessed that I did, he told me that Pearl was not his name—but John Monroe; that he and your father had been partners in business, and that your father had wronged him out of all that he was worth in the world; not only that, but blasted his good name forever, so that he was compelled to assume a false one to hide himself from the scorn of the world. And he asked me to promise him never to become your wife. I implored him not to ask me to crush my love—for I do love you, Albert, love you with my whole heart. He grew angry, and swore that, with his dying breath, he would curse me if I did not yield to his request. Vainly I begged him to have mercy on you—on me. But he was immovable. At last he made one concession. 'If,' he said, 'this young man's father has ever shown, by a single act, that he regretted the wrong that he has done me, I am willing that you should love and marry his son.' Now, Albert, you know all. By the bedside of my dying father, I promised that I would never become your wife. I love you—I own it freely—love you better than I do myself; better than I do all the rest of the world besides, but I can never be yours. You must forget me as I must forget you. It will be a bitter, hard struggle, but it is our fate and we can not change it."

Mourful, indeed, was the tone of the young girl, and the hot tears gathered in the great gray eyes as she spoke.

"I can never forget you!" cried Keene, "nor will I give you up. There is but one thing then that can change your resolution, and that is a single act of justice done by my father to you?"

"Yes."

"Then, Rosa, you are mine!" exclaimed the young man, in joy. "My father did do that act of justice: By his will he left one-half of his property to John Monroe, or to his heirs, if he was dead, in atonement for the wrong that he had done him in past years. There has been, by my orders, advertisements inserted in all the newspapers for John Monroe or his heirs to appear and claim their rights. I little dreamed that those I sought were so near me. So, Rosa, the condition is fulfilled, and you are mine forever."

A warm pressure of willing lips, and Rosa, folded to the heart of her lover, was happy beyond expression.

After the darkness of the night the light had come.

Rosa became the wife of Albert Keene, and, to this day, he has never regretted, even for a moment, the hour when his look first fell upon the great gray eyes—so full of truth and love—of Rosa, the milliner-girl.

Daisy's Selfishness.

BY FANNY ELLIOTT.

It was an artist's studio, where the dim sunlight fell through violet-tinted glass in tessellated spots over the thick Aubusson carpet, so soft and velvety in its creamy-white and glowing cherry hues. Pictures hung in every available nook on the pale, sea-green wall, while sad-faced Niobes, bright-eyed Cupids, and suggestive Psyche's graced their ebony pedestals by windows and in delightfully lighted niches.

It was a luxurious room, luxurious almost to wantonness in its slumberous beauty and voluptuous repose; and the artist, the painter, worshipped it—this gorgeous, delicate art home of his.

He was hardly the sort of man one expected to see, after they had visited this place, or studied his pictures; and, standing against the cool white marble Silence, his head to one side in an attitude of keen criticism, you would have called him an artist very unlike his spiritual ideals.

Guilian Winchester was just of a medium height; his face noble, intellectual, grave to sternness except when he smiled, and then, many a woman would never have told you how that rare, sweet smile sent their hearts all a-quiver. He had fine eyes, large, dark, and not a trifle dreamy; they were brilliant, never bold; and at times, tenderly sweet; again merry and mischievous. His hair was a fine dark brown, not curly, not straight, but with a thick, rich wave and gracefulness that became him to perfection.

This was Guilian Winchester, the artist; the man that many a woman had loved, the man that Daisy Wilmot worshipped, who had asked her to be his wife.

She was a dainty little thing, with wistful eyes and tender lips that seemed made to kiss; she had a rare face, pale as the snow-drop, and faint pink-tinged cheeks. And to her had the honor, the great ecstatic bliss, come, to be chosen by Guilian Winchester for his bride.

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Her pitiful pronunciation of his name was infinitely more touching than any words could have been.

"Then you have no confidence in me, my kind Daisy? I did not think it of you. I never for a moment dreamed you could be so selfish as to debar me from any thing that would redound to my own good, simply because you were jealous."

He spoke calmly, almost coldly.

"Guilian, dear, don't call me selfish! I would—I will do any thing in my power to please you. I will bring Ada Gleason to you."

She spoke sadly, and beckoned to her brother to come.

"Oh, Will, Will, I know I will lose him!" And the echo of her plaint came back to the artist, as he leaned over the stairs and saw her drive away.

"Eletta," that was to be Guilian Winchester's masterpiece, that was to bring him more fame and wealth, was at last completed, and in its haunter of pose, its grand grace of figure, its splendor of flashing black eyes and floating ebony hair, its proud curved lips, and rounded throat, Ada Gleason lived again.

It had been the toil of a half-year, and day after day she had come, with her exuberant, magnetic beauty to sit before him; and now, with the fragrant odor of the blossoms coming in at the open casement, and the May skies shining in white and azure beauty over them, they knew it was for the last time.

That had been a blissful six months; fraught with a strange joy that neither cared to mention; a forbidden sweetness they only dared think of; but to-day she would go out from the studio, never again to lighten it with her joyous presence. She had thrown a rich lace shawl over her trailing white dress, and her dainty little hat was all aglow with vivid pink pansies. She was beautiful, and Guilian Winchester's hands trembled as he collected the brushes and arranged them with needless precision.

"I am too greatly indebted to you, Miss Ada, to attempt to speak my thanks."

He took her hand, and folded it caressingly between his own.

Perhaps his eyes were tell-tales of his heart, for Ada Gleason blushed in sweet confusion.

"I need no thanks, Mr. Winchester. I am sure I have been repaid by your society."

She had almost said, "society," and a bright light glowed in his dark eyes.

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"Ada, I have come to be forgiven—I have come to tell you to forget the words I said. Ada—my heart pleads for you, but my conscience speaks for Daisy. I can not wound her. She loves me—I will cherish her."

His eyes were grave, but a stern light—the light of duty gleamed therein. A pained expression quivered on his proud mouth; and beyond that he gave no sign.

Ada's sweet voice answered him promptly:

"You are right, Mr. Winchester, and I honor you for it. Of my own feelings I will say nothing. I am thankful we have escaped wrong doing. Take Daisy, she is every way worthy of you."

She spoke bravely, even cheerfully, but a deep, deep undertone of anguish lay in her words, and tears trembled on her lashes. It was a terrible sacrifice—for she loved him even as he did her.

The door opened, and Daisy entered; calm, dignified, yet bearing the marks on every lineament of her silent grief.

Straight to Guilian Winchester she walked, and took his hands; then she led him to Ada.

A moment's silence, and she spoke:

"You don't love me, Guilian, and I could not be an unloved wife. Take her and give her the dear name I had so hoped to bear. I am thankful I have the strength to do this; don't refuse me; and, Guilian—Mr. Winchester, in releasing you from your engagement to me, I only ask that in your future days of happiness with Ada, your wife—and the sweet voice quivered pitifully, "you will think of me as one whose selfishness made you happy forever."

She stooped and pressed a passionate kiss on his hand, smiling bravely to Ada, and then went away before they could detain her.

She went away, lonely and unloved by her idol; and in the busy world drowned her first keen agony by ministering to the needs of others; and in after days, when Guilian and Ada were spending happy times in each other's society, Daisy could look and calmly say, "it was all for the best."

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She went away, lonely

the mayor of the city, another thousand by the afflicted family of the dead man, and the detectives left no stone unturned to find some clue to the assassin. But it was all in vain; and the next tragedy turned the attention of the public from the affair. It was soon forgotten by all, save the family who mourned a father lost.

About a week after Tremaine's death, Doctor Dornton, in company with some of his professional brethren, had occasion to visit the lunatic asylum on Blackwell's Island.

After the doctor had finished his examination, and was about to depart, one of the attendants, happening to remember, suddenly said:

"By the way, doctor, we've got a new patient here who mentions your name very frequently, in his ravings. I think he's been under your care at some time."

"Ah, well, I'd like to see him," replied the doctor.

So Dornton was conducted to the bed of the man who in his madness had spoken his name.

"What is the matter with him?" asked the doctor, as they approached the bed in which lay the patient.

"Brain fever," replied the attendant; "he has sustained a fracture of the skull—recently, for the wound is completely healed, but evidently some years ago. It probably affected the brain though, and some recent excitement has produced this attack."

The doctor stood by the side of the bed, and looked upon the sick man. To his utter astonishment, he discovered that the patient was no other than the man he had known as James Whitehead, the secretary of Loyal Tremaine.

"My goodness!" exclaimed the doctor, in astonishment, "can it be possible?"

The man's face had changed greatly since the doctor last looked upon it. Before it was pale and careworn; but now it was the face of a corpse. The thin white hair, straying around the forehead gave it a ghastly look.

"Who brought him here?" asked the doctor.

"The police. They picked him up, insensible, I believe, in Thirtieth street. The strangest thing about it was that he had on a black wig. It was the most natural one that I ever saw; it made him look like a man of forty. He's evidently been a sailor in his young days, for there's a small anchor in India ink on his arm."

"Is he likely to live?"

"No, I didn't think he would survive the night."

Then the sick man opened his eyes—the great, staring black eyes, that glared so wildly around him. He turned convulsively in the bed, as if in agony.

"He is dying!" cried Dornton. The practiced eye of the physician saw the approach of death.

The dying man gazed convulsively in his agony; his lips moved and uttered a single word—the doctor's listening ears caught that word—then with a slight groan, the soul of the sick man—Walter Averill—took its flight to another world.

The sailor husband—the avenger of his wrong—Alfred Brown, the human bloodhound—died with a word upon his lips, and that word was a woman's name—it was:

"Christine!"

[THE END.]

Recollections of the West.

BY RALPH KINGWOOD.

The Death Struggle on Echo River.

Those who visited the Mammoth Cave fifteen years ago can not but remember Stephen, the guide, who, although colored, a quadroon, was a man of much more than ordinary intelligence, and withal, a perfect gentleman.

From long years of association he had learned to love "his cave," as he used to term it, and I doubt if there was a nook or corner throughout the whole extent of the wonderful underground world that he did not know, and have some pleasant memory connected with.

He never grew weary of talking of its wonders and beauties, and would narrate many interesting facts that had come under his own observation. But there was one incident, clothed by vague tradition with unusual horrors, to which he never alluded, nor could he be induced to do so.

But little was then known, indeed there is not more even at this day, so prompt and successful were the measures taken to hush the matter up, and what I am about to relate will be the only account that has ever been given.

I will premise by saying that I had had the good fortune to do Stephen what he considered a great kindness, and hence it came, that only a few months previous to his death, he related to me the following, first exacting a promise of secrecy for a certain length of time:

Near the town of B—, a thriving inland village lying some forty miles south of Louisville, Kentucky, there resided two young men, cousins, but from constant association, unswerving friendship, and remarkable resemblance of features, more frequently judged to be brothers than otherwise.

They were the Damon and Pythias of the little community in which they lived.

But a woman, young and beautiful, came between them, and the friendship of a life-

time was changed to bitter, implacable hatred, engendered and fostered by the demon of jealousy.

The girl loved neither, and yet each thought the other the sole cause of his failure to win her heart. Both were young, hot-blooded, and brave; it could but be expected that a collision would take place, and so it proved.

They met one morning in a grove near the village, and both fell, grievously wounded, almost unto death. But they were not to die so. Strong constitutions and careful nursing brought them back from the valley of shadows.

The girl married another, and went away to distant parts, and these two hated on with increasing fury.

This much Stephen informed me he had learned some time after the terrible denouement that took place in the cave to which he was an eye-witness. It was during the season of 185—, and never before had there been so great a throng at the cave. The guides were kept constantly busy by large parties, who, eager to see the wonders that had been promised, could hardly wait their turn to enter the mysterious portals.

On the eventful day, and Stephen shuddered as he spoke, and carried his hand to his brow with a peculiar motion, as though in pain, he had a larger party than usual under his charge, while the other guide, who had gone on a little ahead, was conducting one equally as large, if not larger.

At the very outset Stephen's attention was drawn to one of the group, as they stood clustered about the entrance. This person was evidently a young man, in years at least, though the haggard face, entirely bloodless, across which deep lines had been drawn, the wild, and, at times, unutterably weary look of the eyes, together with the hair, once raven black, but now flecked here and there with silver threads, all told the story of a whole lifetime of sorrow and suffering crowded into the short space that lies between birth and actual manhood. He seemed to know no one, and none appeared to know him, but as he stood moodily on one side, many glances of pity, not unmingled with curiosity, were cast upon him. Of these he appeared totally unconscious, and when at length the party moved on, he went forward also.

At noon, or thereabout, the two bands joined forces near the banks of Echo river, and preparations were at once begun for lunch. The servants were soon busy, and leaving them so engaged, Stephen strolled off further into the cave, and paused at length upon the banks of the silently flowing, mysterious stream, the rising and ending of which no man knoweth.

He had been here but a moment when he was startled by a deep voice near at hand, and hastily turning, he beheld the young man that he had so particularly noticed at the entrance, standing by his side.

"Will you take me out in the river, while the others are yonder?" he said, pointing back to where the murmur of voices and occasional laughter could be faintly heard.

For a moment the guide hesitated. He did not like the expression he saw upon the other's face, but suddenly prompted by a feeling of commiseration, he replied in the affirmative, and stepped into the boat that lay drawn up to the bank.

The stranger was about following, indeed he had already taken his seat, when a figure suddenly sprang out of the darkness, beyond the line of light from the torches, and with a quick, light bound was into the skiff almost before the guide was aware of his presence.

"Just in time!" exclaimed the intruder, with a short, harsh laugh. "Bound on a voyage of discovery, hey? Permit me to join the expedition," and as he spoke he seized the pole that lay in the bottom of the boat, and placing one end of it against the rock, sent the frail craft spinning away out into the stream.

"For a moment," said Stephen, "I was so surprised that I sat staring, first at one, and then the other of my strange acquaintances, in blank wonder. This was in no wise decreased when I saw the startling resemblance between the two men. Not only in form and face, but the new-comer was, if possible, more haggard and wretched looking than the other. And then I saw that they were not strangers, for they stood, both had risen to their feet, glaring into each other's faces, like wild beasts at bay."

"What ensued," he continued, "and the end quickly came, has always seemed more like the horrid phantasm of a dream than a dread reality. I saw, in an instant, that these two men were bitter, implacable enemies. I saw murder in their glaring, blood-shot eyes, and my very blood curdled, and I felt chilled to the marrow, as, following a shrill, maniacal laugh, I heard the words:

"At last, at last!" and then, with a fury that it is impossible for me to describe, they closed in a death-grapple with no footing beneath them save that frail, unstable skiff.

The struggle was as brief as it was terrible. They fought with the fury of long pent-up hate, and tore each other like wild animals. The other torch had been extinguished in the first struggle, and mine alone now illumined the scene, and I sat crouching in the bow of the boat, striving to steady, and if possible, prevent its turning over."

Suddenly I caught the quick gleam of a knife; I heard a dull, sickening thud, and I saw him who had last come, topple and fall

over into the inky flood that rolled sluggishly beneath. "I shall never forget," and here Stephen's hand again went to his brow with that peculiar motion, "the face of the stabbed man as he slowly sunk from sight, and I often hear in my dreams the shrill yell of triumph—it crashed like muffled thunder along the arches above and beyond—that was uttered by the survivor as he balanced himself a moment on the gunwale of the boat. And then, tossing his arms wildly above his head, leaped into the abyss of waters that swiftly bore him away forever."

"I have never," concluded the guide, "save to a few who had the right to know, before told this fearful episode of my cave life. The matter was hushed up by the friends of the young men, and it was given out that they were drowned accidentally by the boat upsetting. Such was my, at the time, confused account of the party I was guiding. And it broke up the excursion for that day at least, much to my relief."

"I have never crossed the Echo since without the fearful picture rising wildly before my eyes."

Cruiser Crusoe: OR, LIFE ON A TROPIC ISLE.

BY LAFAYETTE LAFOREST.

NUMBER TWENTY-ONE.

The Ron skin was rather heavy and awkward as a sail, but this only proved the tautness and excellence of my canoe. As I turned her to the wind, the boat tilted a little, and lay down to leeward, but she kept her own, and to my infinite delight, it was evident that, properly managed, she would beat to windward.

This was a most soothing discovery, as on this coast the wind appeared to blow periodically in one direction, except that it often shifted at evening and morning. So transported with joy was I with my discovery, that, like a school-boy, I could not sufficiently glut myself with trial, until the sun, rising hot and sultry, warned me to start on my way. Still, such was my infatuation, that I still continued disporting myself for some hours, until I was so fatigued that I was obliged to bathe to restore my exhausted faculties. Then, however, the lengthening shadows warned me to make haste. The river below my dock was narrow, and overhung with trees, while the jungle reeds grew right into the water, so that a night journey would be both dangerous and difficult.

This necessitated my pole being taken down, as it would be as much as I could do to navigate by means of my boat-hook, keeping the canoe in the middle, and especially avoiding the peril of snags and fallen trees, so often fatal to the traveler in undiscovered regions. I feared not for myself, though alligators and hippopotami are no mean enemies; but my anxiety was for my own darling boat—to me, worth all the treasure I possessed.

Hark! what do I hear? The roar of artillery, the report of ten thousand muskets, or the fearful outbreak of a thunder storm?

No—it is the forest on fire!

Up high into the heavens rises the dark and pungent smoke, while the fierce element, burning up the reeds and jungle, causes them to send forth an intermittent roar, which, at times, was deafening; at others, a series of loud and rapid cracklings, which I had mistaken for musketry.

It was a fearful scene, and what was I to do?

There was the choice of waiting until the terrible conflagration was over—until the furious element had expended itself on the dry trees, moss and reeds, when a way through the blackened mass could easily be made; or I could run the gauntlet, and descend the river in spite of the flames, smoke, and falling masses of fire and flame. In my peculiar frame of mind, it could not be difficult to decide on which course to pursue.

I would risk the trial by fire.

I was now about twenty yards from my dock, the aspect of which so changed that I scarcely could recognize it at all. The half-dead tree, from which the dry moss and creeping plants had depended, had caught fire. The heat of the burning pile, had been so great as to scorch the plants and trunk, until they were as dry as tinder, when they flamed up in a hot and massive column, that seemed to reach the very sky.

For now more than six weeks had all this tropical vegetation been under the influence of a broiling sun, that penetrated to the very sap. Grass, leaves, trunks, were all equally affected by the scorching sun, so that in a few minutes one broad sheet of flame enveloped the whole of the woods within sight.

But one side of the river was free, and I determined, despite the smoke, which was blown across the stream, to attempt the passage, as, if the fire were to become general, the journey would be perilous in the extreme. Fortunately, my canoe was extremely manageable. So great was the necessity for extreme caution, that I allowed the boat to go down with the current, only being careful to keep her off from the other side by means of my invaluable pole. In this way I made some slight advance, when lo! another danger, on which I had not calculated, faced me.

Both sides of the river were on fire.

This is how it happened. I have said that large trees, mangroves, and others, grew close to the water's edge, the branches of which overlapped each other. But just facing me the narrow gap of the river was lined by coco-nut palms. The trunks had been entirely hidden when I saw them last by dependent vines. These had been caught by the swift march of the terrible element, and now the trees themselves were on fire.

It was grand. It was now dark. The felt-like substance between the roots of the trees, as well as the leaves themselves, catching fire, and communicating from one to the other, the falling, scorching branches made firework-like descents, and the banks of the river on both sides resembled a row of gigantic torches flaming and waving in the air. It was awful, for how to pass I knew not, as the fierce rapidity of the flames could scarcely be described. The fire leaped from tree to tree, from bush to bush, ere you thought one, and flicked up with its fiery tongue every thing within reach—grasses, vines, leaves, and then the trees themselves.

I looked behind, and saw the infernal. The huge, massive trees, baobabs, and others, which interlaced their boughs, were one sheet of flame, while the falling flakes had set fire to the reeds, which crackled, spurred, and burnt with the intensity of turpentine. It was one vast bonfire. The aspect of the heavens was infernal. Just above the line of flames, themselves bright and clear, there was a lurid yellow glitter, gradually tapering down to the faintest of light. Above this was a dense black canopy of smoke, which hung like a funeral pall over the whole island. The effect was of the most oppressive character, as to gaze around, the last hours of the earth seemed to have been counted; while that the beautiful vegetation of the island was to be destroyed, scarce admitted of a doubt.

But this was not an hour for action, but reflection. Escape from my post seemed impossible. My position was awkward and peculiar.

I was in a bend in the stream, where the width of the river was nearly double what it was above and below. The shore was away some fifty feet on both sides, the trees to which I was tolerably near growing right in the water. To escape was easy, for I could note that the forest was still unscathed at the back. But then, what was to become of my canoe?

This thought roused my latent energies. I grasped my pole, stood up, and proceeded to guide my way. The noises were hideous. I could hear, amidst the roar of the flames, the hiss of the dying serpent, and I could see huge crocodiles, which at first had taken the fire for the beaming of an unusually hot day, gliding their slimy bodies through the water to escape the fire.

Hundreds of fish floated on the surface, killed by the fearful stench that rose from the river as vast blazing masses fell into the channel. Eels of a huge and strange species came crawling, half dead, out of the reeds, while loads and other reptiles skipped about with unusual activity.

It was a regular scene for Pandemonium, through which I passed with a beating and anxious heart. My lion-skin mantle was cast over my shoulders to ward off the falling flakes of fire, from the burning trees and wood, and thus I steered as rapidly as I could through the ordeal fire.

The heat was intense, the smoke came wafted in clouds to my nostrils, bringing on violent fits of coughing, which caused me several times nearly to upset the boat. Still the awful conflagration seemed not to decrease, the heavens looked angry and red, when my thoughts and fears were nearly brought to an end forever by my canoe running against something that looked like a rock, which, however, as it was touched, seemed to rise out of the water and lift my canoe bodily from its own element.

I fell flat on my face, with a rapidity which did my presence of mind great credit, and next minute was again afloat. Then peering over the side, it became clear, as I suspected, that the canoe had gone full tilt against one of a herd of hippopotami, escaping from some favorite feeding-ground, driven forth by the fire and smoke.

It was fortunate that the animal had been satisfied with just lifting himself out of the water, as, when enraged, it has been known to lift a boat full of men, and send them all sprawling into the river, for caymans, sharks and alligators to prey upon them.

When the first effect of my startling encounter was over, I became aware that the fire was behind me, and, having had quite enough dangers for one day, the canoe was cautiously impelled up a little creek, where, should the fire not reach me, I resolved to pass the night.

My sleep was very sound, and when morning broke, to my amazement, the strength of the fire was broken. In some mysterious way it had gone out, and nothing could be seen but huge columns of black smoke that soiled and obscured the heavens, while high in the air soared the vulture, and high on the tree-branch crouched the turkey-buzzard.

I looked with regret at the desolation around, but soon the reflection came to my mind, that nothing in the world can equal the growth of tropical vegetation, the action of which can be compared to nothing but

that of the ocean, which tears but the impress of the track of a ship for a moment, and then rolls on, the same as ever. One rainy season would restore all that, rank growth of creepers, vines and jungle-grass.

But then what cared I, who was about to leave a spot which, in beauty, resembled a paradise, but was unendurable as a residence simply because I was alone?

My breakfast consisted of a piece of dry meat, a hard biscuit of my own baking, and a drink of water, after which, anxious to reach the port whence I was to start on my perilous journey—most delightful to me—once more I sent the canoe gliding through the water, the shores of which were no longer fiery furnaces, but banks of verdure, flowers and creeping plants.

My spirit was buoyant. The dangers I had passed through gave a zest and charm to present safety, and the fine weather, the song of birds, the gambols of whole schools of monkeys, amused and even enlivened me. My gun was close to my hand, but I shot nothing, though much came in my way. There were snipes in abundance in the marshes, and the pelican busy fishing, and once I fell over an old adjutant—the very king of fishing birds.

He stood about ten feet high, with a bill eighteen inches round and more, and about four feet long. He took no notice of me whatever, but strutting out into the water, stood like a statue, except that his head moved uneasily. Then down went his prodigious beak, and up came what looked like a moderate-sized conger eel. Then the bird lifted his beak, and went away rejoicing to his breakfast.

I could have laughed, except that just then I noted that my canoe was proceeding at an unusually rapid rate, with an inclination to turn round. I leaped up, and saw at once that I was in a rapid, while at the same moment the din of falling waters came clear and distinct to my ear. A cold perspiration burst over my body. That I was approaching a cataract was undoubted, that my boat was doomed appeared certain, while I myself might not escape with life.

For an instant the thought flashed across my mind of swimming to shore, and abandoning my canoe to its fate. But my soul loathed the very thought.

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A Gallop for Life.

AN ADVENTURE ON THE PLAINS.

BY CAPT. CHARLES HOWARD.

NEVER will I forget the adventure I am about to relate. It is as fresh in my mind now as though it happened but yesterday, and not five long years ago.

When but a child, books detailing wild adventures among the wily red denizens of the great West, filled me with a desire to become a hunter, and I fancied myself eclipsing the renowned Boone, and becoming the Aetion of America. But I signed when I remembered that the woods and valleys that "echoed to the tread" of Boone and Kenton, now teemed with the fruits of civilization, and I reluctantly abandoned my *chateaux en Espagne*.

As I grew to manhood I became immersed in business affairs, and remained "a law-abiding citizen of the Commonwealth of Kentucky" until my thirtieth year.

One day several old hunters, fresh from the plains, arrived in Louisville and found their way into my place of business. The wild tales which they related rekindled the fire of youth in my bosom, and ere the dawn of another day I had announced my unalterable determination of spending a year or two in the Far West.

Accordingly I intrusted my business to my partners, and, accompanied by three fellows, who were as enthusiastic as myself, left the city.

Life on the great plains was not what I had pictured it, and before many months had passed I more than once wished myself behind the counter again.

We chased the lion—that majestic monarch of the plains—hunted the wolf and fox for pasture, and formed an acquaintance with old Indian-fighters, half-breeds, and real Indians.

One morning I left the boys preparing breakfast, to have a ride over the timberless country. I had reached a spot about a mile from camp when, to my surprise, an antelope sprang up before me and darted away like the wind. Momentarily drawing rein, I raised my rifle and sent a bullet after his beastship. He reared upon his hind feet and staggered, but quickly recovered his equilibrium.

Knowing that I had hit him, and feeling assured that I could soon overtake him, I hastily drove another bullet home and started in pursuit. For several miles I gradually gained on the noble animal, and once, believing myself within rifle-shot, fired at him. My shot was ineffectual, and he kept on.

Not wishing to return empty-handed to the camp after badly wounding an antelope, I continued the pursuit until I was suddenly brought to a stand by the report of a rifle far ahead and in the very path of the animal.

I saw the smoke of the discharge, and the antelope bounded into the air and then fell back. Immediately afterward a form, whether of hunter or Indian I could not determine at that distance, rose from the tall grass, and approached the object of my shot. To me the person looked like a white hunter, and I rode toward him, intending to claim a portion of the beast. I was within half a mile of the kneeling form beside the antelope, when I discovered that it was an Indian. Rash as I have ever been, I would have ridden on and accosted the red Arab of the plains, had I not noticed many tufts of feathers elevated above the top of the grass.

True, I could see no horses, while I bestrode as good a one as ever crossed over the plains; but I knew that the Indians were Comanches, whose horses were stretched at full length beside them. There was no alternative left me but to turn Murat's head and ride for life. Quickly I followed the impulse of safety, and, as I wheeled, I heard full twenty distinct yells, and as many horses springing to their feet. Each one bore a Comanche on his back—those daring warriors, whose horsemanship has never been equaled.

"Now, Murat," I cried to my noble coal-black steed, as I sank the spurs into his flanks, "you must carry your master out of danger, for henceforth he ridden by a Comanche."

Murat seemed to understand me, for he threw back his ears, and, snorting, darted forward. I knew the animal I bestrode—knew his great endurance and speed. But he was not as fresh as seemed my pursuers' steeds, for the chase after the antelope had somewhat tested his strength. I did not despair, however; but believed that he would, if horse could, bear me safely into camp.

I judged that I was about twelve miles from "the boys," and as I was possessed of a good compass, I knew that I was riding in the right direction. On, on, through the grass I galloped at a break-neck speed, glancing back ever and anon at my red pursuers.

They came on, confident, I believed, of ultimate success, and the yells they sent after me served to drive the silver spurs deeper into Murat's sides. If captured I expected the quarter the Bushman gets from a Caffre, and the thought of a certain blonde in Louisville urged me on, and made me doubly anxious to escape.

I noticed before I had ridden over three miles of my terrible gallop for life, that but one of the Comanches carried a gun—the rest were armed with bows, arrows and spears.

I believed that the one with the gun was the best marksman, and I determined to put him out of the way, if possible. It was exceedingly hazardous to increase my speed to fire at an Indian—especially the quick Comanche—but, perhaps my salvation hung

upon his destruction. I examined the priming of my rifle, which I carried before me, ready for instant use, and gently drew rein.

My pursuers at once noticed my movement and halted with a chorus of pandemonium-like yells; for they believed that Murat had given out. Glancing back each minute I noted the moment when they were within shooting distance, and, wheeling, I confronted them.

At once they fathomed my design, and threw their wily selves under their horses' bellies. I, of course, had not time to draw a bead on the one with the rifle, and I fired at him with a moment's aim. I believed then, and have not changed my opinion since, that the hand of Providence directed that bullet, which, though it did not injure the Comanche, rendered the rifle useless, for I saw him cast it aside.

Then, with an audible exclamation of joy, I wheeled again, and setting the butt of my rifle on my left foot, loaded, as Murat, not a little strengthened by the short halt, dashed forward.

I had paused that I might get a sure aim and effectually rid the world of a curse. But I could shoot—and true, too—by turning in the saddle while my horse was going at the height of speed. Looking back a short time after firing, I saw that the Comanches could be reached by a bullet, and I resolved to send another defiantly at them. A plumed warrior, tall, and lithe of limb, headed my swarthy pursuers, and suddenly turning in the saddle I fired at him.

My shot, to my satisfaction, was fatal, for the next instant a riderless horse was dashing over the plains. The other Indians did not pause to assist their leader, whom I suppose was killed outright, but, centered their whole attention upon my capture.

I turned to reload, when, to my horror, I discovered that my horn was empty! Surely it was half full of powder when I left camp, and a short examination proved that the wooden plug was missing—in my haste I had missed the office, and the powder had been jerked out by my rapid riding.

What was I to do?

A lucky idea struck me, which I at once carried into effect. I went through the movements of loading my rifle, and rode on. I knew that I was within three miles of the camp, and if Murat held out a few minutes longer, I would be saved. Noble creature! It was a terrible trial for him, and I vowed that if he sunk exhausted I would perish with him.

"Three miles and we are saved," I said,

placing my mouth close to his ears. He snorted as though he understood me, and shook the clotted gore from his nostrils. He was literally covered with foam, and my spurs had long since ceased to bring forth blood.

Still, on, on, oh, what a terrible ride!

"The landscape sped away behind, like an ocean flying before the wind. And the steed, like a bark fed with fire, swept on, with his wild eyes full of fire."

As the hunter, when pursued by the bear, resorts to artifice to momentarily check Bruin, so must I do to check the Comanches and save my life.

Again I could have dropped another of their number, but, as the reader has seen, I had no powder. Could I not check the demons simply by aiming my empty rifle at them? The experiment was certainly worth trying, and intent upon the artifice I wheeled Murat.

As once before, the Comanches precipitated themselves beneath their horses; but I continued to aim deliberately. Suddenly I turned, darted forward, and discovered that I had gained a few feet.

However, I lost a little by stopping, and I hit upon a new plan. I dropped the rein and turned in the saddle. Again the Comanches stopped and hid their red bodies, while I was galloping on.

For some time I kept this up, gaining considerable ground, when they seemed to comprehend my intention, and paid no attention to my threats. Suddenly I felt a shudder creep over Murat, and then he fell heavily to the earth.

Fortunately for me I alighted on my feet, and glancing in the direction we had been going I beheld six forms looming up between me and the azure sky. Two of the rapidly approaching horsemen I saw at once were my companions, and the others were hunters who had lately joined our party.

They were near a mile onward, and I feared that I would be the Comanches' victim before they arrived. Therefore I drew my revolver and knife, and stationed myself beside my brave and, I believed, dying horse.

"On came the Indians, who, having seen my friends, seemed determined to have my scalp. But the boys came forward like the wind, and the Comanches noticing my death-dealing revolver and the aspect of their new foes, sent a volley of arrows at me."

"When I saw the barred missiles whistled around me, I turned my head and saw that one of the Indians had pierced my right arm, and a third inflicted a painful and exceedingly troublesome wound in my hand."

Then they turned and scampered back, pursued by the boys, whose horses were fresh. Far ahead I saw the Indians wheel, and a battle took place. At first the whites wavered before the unexpected attack; but they soon recovered and completely defeated their red adversaries without the loss of a man.

Murat, my noble horse, after a series of efforts got upon his feet again, and managed to reach camp. Then, thanks to one of the hunters who was something of a veterinarian, he recovered, and stands in my stable to-day. Money can not buy him.

Reader, my story is told. Do you envy me my terrible GALLOP FOR LIFE?

Camp-Fire Yarns.

How we Waxed the Apaches.

PETE WILKINS stopped short in a joke, and watched his comrade.

Wilson dropped on his face by the edge of the mound, and remained in that position, with only his head over it, gazing out over the plain. Presently he drew slowly back from the brink, and crawled toward us on his hands and knees, till some distance inside, when he rose, and ran toward us.

"What are you, Billy?" inquired Pete, as he came in.

"Injuns," said Wilson, laconically.

We all leaped to our feet, and looked to our animals instinctively. The Englishman alone retained his seat.

"Thur arter the buffler," continued Billy; "an' they seed me afore I dropped. What a durned fool I war to be sure! I mout 'a known they'd be a-hangin' on the tail of the herd."

"Well, Mr. Wilson," observed Sir John, tranquilly, "since you've got us into the scrape you'll have to get us out. I suppose you can."

"Oh, I don't know, Sir John. There's a wheen on 'em down thar."

"Ah, well, Mr. Wilson—that's really not my business, you know. Our contract was clearly understood, you know. Five hundred dollars when I arrive in Santa Fe, safe and sound—you to do all the fighting necessary."

"I knows it, Sir John."

"How many—ah—Indians do you count, Mr. Wilson?"

"Guess there's about forty, Sir John. A huntin'-party."



A GALLOP FOR LIFE.

"Ah, well; tell me when it's over, I'll finish my breakfast now, Mr. Wilson."

And the baronet quietly opened a box of sardines as he spoke. His baggage contained quite a store of comestibles.

While this conversation was going on, the rest of us were not idle. We were looking to our weapons and horse equipments. Weston, Bullard and I were better armed than any of the party; for we each of us bore one of those most terrible of all modern weapons, the Henry or Winchester rifle.

"Old Pete had often laughed at them as 'newfangled pop-guns,' compared with his own old Kentucky rifle. We were about to give him a convincing proof that day of the power of the weapons he despised."

Bill Wilson started after his own horse, which was close by, and allowed itself to be caught at once. He then galloped off to drive in the other animals.

In ten minutes more they were all tethered close to us, and we prepared to defend ourselves. We had not attempted to keep a watch for the Indians. The thunder of the passing herds of buffaloes convinced us that they could not be very near. But as soon as our animals were secured we turned our attention to the enemy. And it was time.

I was startled when I went to the edge of the mound and looked over. The end of the vast concourse of bisons had come at last. And then, close on the heels of the last stragglers, sure enough, was a large party of Indian. Pete Wilkins was close to me.

"Huntin'-party," indeed! muttered he. "Tare a near-party, paint, feathers an' all!" The savages caught sight of my figure as he spoke, and raising a shrill yell, the whole troop galloped toward the butte. Before I could draw back, there was a flash and a puff of smoke from one of the horsemen. Crack went a rifle.

The next minute a bullet whizzed over the heads of our party, but far too high to do any damage.

"Haw! haw!" laughed Pete, with a grim chuckle. "Can't ye shoot straighter nor that? Guess I'll fix yer."

As he spoke he leveled his own long rifle. He was arrested by the voice of Charley Weston.

"Don't shoot, Pete!" he cried; "don't shoot. You'll spoil all the fun, I tell you."

The old mountain-man slowly turned and confronted the speaker. He had begun to conceive a great respect for the quiet Charley, and his words were not without effect.

"Well, youngster, what art'it?" he asked, doubtfully.

"If you fire now those fellows will sheer off and besiege us. As it is they don't know

how many there are of us, and they have only seen two. Well, they will try to charge up the slope of the butte. Let them come! If Bullard and Burton and I don't sicken them, I'll eat your horse, Pete. But, we must let them get close, to give them what I want. Remember that we each carry thirty shots, which we can deliver in one single minute. What good is your rifle compared to that?"

"There are solid sense in that ar," remarked Bill Wilson. "You and me, Pete, 'll hev to let the youngsters fight fur us, a bit. I votes to let the skunks come close afore we giv'es 'em Jesse."

Pete was an obstinate, prejudiced mountain-man; but, even he could see the sense of this. So we all took our stations in a thin skirmish-line along the edge of the slope of the butte. Following Pete's sagacious advice, each constructed a hasty shelter of his saddle and pack; and, thus protected, we lay down to watch events.

Sir John Brown was tranquilly finishing his breakfast.

Just as we got into position he lit a cigar, picked up his saddle and gun, and sauntered toward the edge of the mound as coolly as if there was no danger. He established himself about twenty feet from me.

"Why, Sir John," I observed, "I thought you were going to take it easy."

"Ah—Mr.—ah—Burton—I may as well see the fun as well as the rest of you—and—ah—I should rather like to pop over an Indian or two, to help you."

"You'll soon have the opportunity," I returned, "for here they come."

Sure enough, as I spoke, the whole party of Indians galloped around the edge of the butte, and without any hesitation drove their horses up the slope.

Apparently they expected an easy conquest; for they came up as hard as they could, brandishing spear and shield, and yelling like devils. They little knew what awaited them.

I could see that there were only a very few rifles in the party, not more than three or four, all told; but they were all bending their bows as they came closer. It was arranged that we were not to fire till their arrows could reach us.

It takes much longer to tell now than it took to act, that battle. There came a shower of arrows in a few moments. Then Bill Wilson's and old Pete's rifles cracked simultaneously, from their stations on the wings of our tiny skirmish-line.

Then the three of us, with the repeating rifles, poured in our shots as fast as we could

mountain-man, with a bow. "An' I must say as how I never, in all my days, met a finer gentleman nor you, Sir John. Here's hopin' we may soon meet again."

And Billy tossed off his "old rye," with a gusto, as we all stood around the hotel-bar to take a parting "smile."

"Thank you, sir," returned Sir John. "Gentlemen, your healths."

And we clinked our glasses all round, and departed on our various ways.

Beat Time's Notes.

SQUIVIVUS, yes, Squivvus, has been elected to the legislature! I always knew that fellow would come to some untimely end; but it wasn't my fault. I tried to make a man of him; anyway, I did the best I knew how, and there he is! Oh, I am exasperated!

Squivvus and I were twins; that is, I mean we were born on the same day, and have always been like sisters to each other. But that boy had very strange ways. I think it must have been a slight touch of insanity that he was afflicted with, if that is what you call it. He was very, very curious.

That boy had such singular notions that not under the most favorable circumstances did he ever tell a lie—absolutely wouldn't do it! Think of it! He seemed to want to imitate Washington's little boy when his father ran out, seeing he was barking up the wrong tree, and uttered those memorable words: "Woodman, spare that tree!" I do hate these imitations.

That boy wouldn't steal; he'd go hungry first, and do without watermelons a week. He would not run off from school, but was so ignorant that he stayed in and actually studied his books! He was never addicted to profane profanation, even when he cut his finger and a long string of emphatics in italics would have made an excellent salve!

I always looked for that boy to be taken up in some fiery chariot, for I never could see to what use he could be put in this world. I did my noblest and best for him, and tried to reform him every way, so that he might become as good as we were. I humanely thrashed him every day of his life—and he thrashed me the next—but it was of no earthly use. I read the annals of Greece and Rome, and the records of the State's prison, but could find nothing like him.

I remember after we grew up, of going with him one night to serenade a young lady, whom he loved, but who didn't care very much for him to speak of, because he had such outlandish ways. There were several of us along. The singing was quite fine, but I think the song was selected from the book of Methodist Hymns, but, of course, the lady "slept on" without hearing it, although the window was up. In the middle of another song I pulled a sunflower which was growing near by and threw it up so that it fell at his feet as though it came from the window. He picked it up, looked at it, cut the song off before he even got to the end of a syllable, and said, "Come on, boys," and he didn't even swear! No, sir! actually didn't swear! And there he is in the legislature!

The rest of the boys pursued the even tenor of their ways, and all succeeded in getting into the penitentiaries, save me—but a man can't tell to-day what will happen to-morrow any more.

A FELLOW sends a poem beginning in this fashion:

"Oh, classic muse, descend and touch
This pen with fire from above,
That I may sing both sweet and much of her I love,"

and wants me to kindly touch it up, and negotiate for its sale. He says Tennyson would charge two hundred dollars for that much poetry, but he is willing to sign the contract for less than that even. I have kindly touched up the first verse in one or two places, but somehow it seems to read a little different, viz.:

"Oh, do you know what you're about,
Thus rashly, sir, to take up pens?
Say, does your mother know you're out—of sense?"

I am willing to touch the balance of it up if he desires.

THERE is land so rich out west that if you plant a little stick, a seed of broom-corn, and a piece of wire together, these will produce in a short time an excellent broom; or if you cut it off early enough, a fine brush-broom.

CAN you tell me how you can pour into a gallon jug two quarts of water, one quart of vinegar, four pints of milk, and two pints of wine? If you can you know more than I do.

COFFINS are symbols of aristocracy, because their odor is rank. They reekent the sea, and are caught on shore, where they come out to dry. Their main occupation is to be mashed up with potatoes and baked in balls, and of which I'm fearfully fond.

IF you dream of wading across a river fourteen feet deep, and of swallowing two little darkies, three stove-pipes, one iron kettle and a machine-shop, it is a sign—well, it's a sign your head isn't right.

JACK writes that he has been troubled with vertigo. If he had insanity he wouldn't have vertigo.

PAUL—the moon stood still once while Joshua's army was blowing horns, and since that time whenever a man has taken his horns he swears the moon doesn't move.

BEN DERR—You are mistaken when you say all malt comes from Malta, or that all traveling jokers come from Journey.

WHEN the cat's away the mice begin to play, and I don't blame them a cent.

THE palm is given to virtue, but I used to receive my mother's palm on account of vice.

WHY is the tower at Pisa sinful? Because it is base-ly inclined.

BECAUSE Woman's Rights are patent, they are not patent rights.

This pen has served me long. In writing artless song. And I keep it for its use: And if some measure it has sung, Should be in a measure harsh and wrong, And drawn out exceeding long. This pen you must excuse. For it formerly belonged to another good.

LIFE is found pretty much everywhere except in cemeteries; we all have some of it, more or less—especially less. It is very much affected by the vicissitudes of income, and isn't worth a cent unless it has good clothes. It is sometimes in the pulpit, in the papers, and in old chieft.

EXPECTATIONS of a legacy are often mere dreams looming in the air, made by an heir-loom.

BUT ere I go to sleep—I have succeeded in getting my foot to napping—I sign myself, Yours solemnly.

BEAT TIME.